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COMPOSITIONS BY WILLIAM WALLACE

Symphony No. 1 . . .	The Creation.
Symphony No. 2 . . .	Koheleth (choral), founded upon Ecclesiastes.
Symphonic Poem No. 1.	The Passing of Beatrice (Dante).
Symphonic Poem No. 2.	Amboss oder Hammer (Goethe).
Symphonic Poem No. 3.	Sister Helen (Rossetti).
Symphonic Poem No. 4.	Greeting to the New Century.
Symphonic Poem No. 5.	Sir William Wallace, A.D. 1305–1905.
Symphonic Poem No. 6.	Françoys Villon.
Suite No. 1	The Lady from the Sea (Ibsen).
Suite No. 2	A Scots Fantasy.
Suite No. 3	Pelléas et Mélisande (Maeterlinck).
Suite No. 4	In A.
Song-Cycles	Freebooter Songs.
	Jacobite Songs.
	Lords of the Sea.
	etc., etc.

THE THRESHOLD OF MUSIC

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THE THRESHOLD OF MUSIC

AN INQUIRY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUSICAL SENSE

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BY

WILLIAM WALLACE

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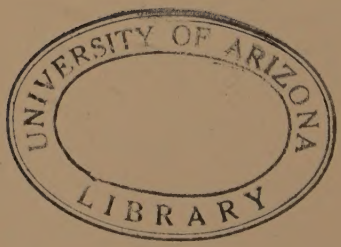

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PREFACE

In this book I have attempted to discuss the Art of Music in relation to other phases of thought, and to trace, through its history, the cerebral processes which are concerned in its development.

Hitherto this aspect of the art has not claimed the attention of many observers. The musician's reluctance to inquire into it is comprehensible enough, but it is less easy to understand why those whose studies lead them into at least one department of music should be disinclined to pursue their researches further. For, although music as an art may present itself to many as somewhat complex and demanding a special gift, its technical side is not more abstruse than other subjects which scientific men are compelled to master on their way to deeper investigations. It has also the advantage of supplying us with documents which demonstrate, step by step, the highest effort of which the musical sense was capable at definite points in its evolution, and

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it is upon their testimony that I venture to base the conclusions which are put forth here.

I am well aware that the subject is an immense one, and that I am touching merely its periphery. The musician, and no doubt the man of science as well, may complain that I have not given the fullest consideration to that side of the art which more particularly affects himself. For the present, the middle course is the only one possible.

If it should appear that I employ, in some instances, the methods of the devil's advocate, it must be borne in mind that I am considering the art less as a branch of æsthetics than as an expression of psychical energy, and that the results of a given period in music, or the attainments of an individual composer, have to be considered here solely in their relation to the evolution of a human faculty.

My aim has been to interest the musician in the mental forces to which he owes his own accomplishment and his perception of the art, and, at the same time, to present to the non-musical reader the tangible record of a sense which, unconscious though he may be of its influence, may still occupy no small place in his own sphere of thought.

The chart at the end of the book is designed to give a conspectus of musical energy side by side with other phases of creative activity. It has been

impossible to include every name in so limited a space, and I have thought it sufficient to mention those men who are identified with definite movements.

This preface would be incomplete without an acknowledgment of my deep indebtedness to my brother-composer and friend, Mr. Cecil Forsyth, who has given to me generously of his ripe scholarship and wise musical knowledge.

WILLIAM WALLACE.

LONDON, *August*, 1907.

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THE THRESHOLD OF MUSIC

CHAPTER I

THE SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE

In the following pages I propose to trace the development of the Art of Music, and to show its direct bearing upon the evolution of a human faculty. The musical sense has not been the subject of research to any great extent. Biologists, indeed, have referred, somewhat sketchily, to its probable origin in the evolution of man, but in spite of their insistence upon the fact that every stage in development as a whole is important, they have brought their investigations in this topic to a close at the very point where the interest, if not the difficulty, arises.

All scientific men are not musicians, nor are many musicians versed in science, and while the former have thought it sufficient for their purpose to touch diffidently on music, so as to give their general inquiry an air of completeness, those in the latter

category who have dealt with the expansion of the art have been content to accept theories partly because of their authoritative source, partly also because they themselves were not qualified to discuss the purely biological or psychological aspects of the subject. It must be confessed, further, that the numerous expositions of a composer's "philosophy," the inner meaning of his works, the "appreciations," the analytical discourses on this masterpiece or that, leave us in a nebulous state of mind. The most obvious proceeding in music too often is attributed to some remote occurrence or to some banal idea, without a scintilla of evidence or even a glimmering of humour. These extravagances may find a public to welcome them, but it is not a public distinguished for its reasoning or its discrimination. On the other hand, the faintest suspicion of charlatanry is enough to rouse antagonism in the very kind of intellect which would be of the utmost use and importance to the art.

To speak frankly, the attitude of the scientific man is somewhat complacent: he is satisfied with his own conclusions regarding the probable origin of some faculty: he is content to rely upon his hypothesis without regard to those influences which from century to century may have affected man's intellectual progress. I would not be understood as asserting that no serious attention has been directed to the

question. On the contrary, music even in the abstract has exerted a strange fascination over many a savant whose name is now a household word. But while he draws his conclusions from music in order that they may fit in with the thread of his argument, he is so intent upon other questions of evolution that he has not the time or perhaps the disposition to investigate a phase of cerebral energy which he not unnaturally associates with preposterous antics and exhibitions of vanity. Specially with reference to the musical sense he is apt to shirk—pardonably enough when we consider the immensity of the task—the due investigation of the advance which has been made from the earliest times, and to take refuge in the theory that the human faculty for music has existed as long as man has been man, remaining in a dormant or latent state till the requisite stimulus has arisen for putting it into action. In a subsequent chapter[1] I will consider the theory of Latency more fully, but it must be emphasised at the outset that no hypothesis can carry weight unless it takes into account all the steps which have led to the present condition of music.

We are able to lay our hands on documents which show the expression of a man's musical sense from remote ages to our own time in unbroken con-

[1] See p. 248.

tinuity. It is clear from them that music is in a much more highly organised state to-day than it was even fifty years ago, yet, despite this fact, it is remarkable that the scientific mind has not considered it worth while to investigate this growth. The inquirer who is preoccupied with theories and problems in the domain of tangible things may quite reasonably identify "music" with some form of entertainment, and his not altogether incomprehensible attitude is apt to become one of supercilious indifference. This is further increased by his recognition of the grave disadvantages which music suffers at the hands of many executants and interpreters. A man trained to think and to observe may be forgiven if he associates music with a parade of self-esteem and effeminacy; he naturally regards it as an emanation from an unattractive personality. Even its surroundings as presented to him in the concert-room can obliterate very easily from the mind all notions that what he is listening to is the result of a highly organised cerebral apparatus.

There is no doubt that the class to which music should make the strongest appeal on an intellectual basis is frequently driven to cherish half-pitying scorn and contempt for the beings who transmit to him the thoughts of great composers, and no one, except his immediate neighbour, will blame him if he attempts by means of a pianola to pass an hour

amid the sounds that Beethoven heard with his inner sense. At the same time, apart from the curvettings on the platform, apart from the indiscreet ovations, apart from that ugliest of all human noises, popular applause, music should exist to the thinker as a dimension of some account, and it is remarkable in these days when there is scarcely a phase of mental activity which has escaped the search-light of scientific investigation, that the complete study of music should have met with so little attention. I am by no means oblivious of the work that has already been done in attempting to localise the musical sense in the history of the world, but I venture to assert that that work has been of a circumscribed character, in which personal observation has been almost entirely absent. Something more is requisite than a bald catalogue of "travellers' tales," and the musician has as clear a title to scepticism in regard to an explorer's version of the music of primitive races as the anatomist would have in regard to the reputed discovery of an eighth cervical vertebra in an Australian Bushman. Possibly, at no very distant date, the musician will have his special duties in an expedition with the botanist and the geologist, the naturalist and the physicist : the phonograph will then record for us sounds that deceive even the skilled ear. Possibly too it will come to be recognised that while we may flatter ourselves that we

have a wide view of physical principles, we are scanning merely the horizon of man's mental endowments. In the pseudo-scientific consideration of music we are confronted with the extraordinary fact that the investigator will readily accept, without inquiry into credentials, the evidence of any observer, while in matters to which he has applied his own highly specialised powers of discernment, he will discard as untrustworthy all testimony which he cannot corroborate within the range of his own knowledge.

It may be pointed out that Darwin, himself ἄμουσος, himself "psychically deaf," was content to refer, at no great length it is true, to the probable origin of the musical sense without examining its subsequent development. It is curious, however, that while he is disposed to attribute the acquirement of musical notes to the necessity for "charming the opposite sex," a theory which fits in with his hypothesis of "sexual selection," he scarcely lays sufficient stress on the change that the human voice undergoes in the male at puberty, a change which may be the last vestige in man of a modification of the laryngeal apparatus which might at one time have been common, not to several genera, but to the entire mammalian species.

Further than this, when he says,[1] "As neither the

[1] *Descent of Man*, 1874, p. 569. I quote his actual words.

enjoyment nor the capacity of producing musical notes are faculties of the least use to man in reference to his daily habits of life, they must be ranked among the most mysterious with which he is endowed,"—when he makes this statement in connection with "sexual selection," he seems to be attributing to the strongest example of utility that we know, namely "sexual selection," the origin of a faculty which he is satisfied is "of the least use."

The insistence upon "utility" by men of science is fatal to any formulated hypothesis regarding music.

Weissmann, not like Darwin "psychically deaf," says,[1] "One discovery is ever built upon another; and the history of music is not less a history of inventions than that of the electric telegraph."

This may be in part admitted, but the parallel is scarcely a felicitous one. For while the electric telegraph is incontestably of use to man, its results are definite and tangible like the apparatus which produces them: music, on the other hand, is the indefinite and intangible product of man's brain. We may be sure that Volta had to run the gauntlet of criticism for "wasting his time" over the apparently useless results that he obtained, just as every composer has been challenged, not only by his

[1] *Essays upon Heredity*, vol. 2, p. 43. The original essay was published for the first time in 1889.

own immediate circle, but by a thinker like Darwin, to show that the offspring of his musical faculty can in any way be turned to the service not so much of mankind as of his aged parents.

I grant for the sake of argument that the musical sense was originally a phase in the espousals necessary for the continuance of the species,—I grant, again for the sake of argument, that the art is an invention, but it is surely premature to question its utility until its development shows signs of having reached a final stage. To say, as Weissmann does in one breath, that music is an invention and that it is useless, is to state a contradiction in terms. Without any suggestion of disparaging the labours of those who have thrown light into the obscure recesses of man's history, I am unable to accept any hypothesis which does not take into account all the evidence which exists as to the development of man's faculties, and particularly that which is furnished by a close scrutiny of the means by which the present fabric of music has been erected.

We may be to-day as regards music in the same stage of wonderment as some little group of fishermen were in unrecorded times, when one of them, in polishing a pretty thing, too light for a missile, but uncommon enough to stir his pride of possession, and to excite the covetousness of his friends, discovered that when he rubbed it a chip of straw flew

and adhered to it. That, possibly, was not further off from us in the brief span of a century of centuries, than the first musical interval. The uselessness of the discovery killed time, as the "non-utility" of music—the expert would persuade us—likewise kills time. But conceive the properties of this translucent toy magnified to a dimension several universes beyond man's powers of thought, and you have one solitary brain by Niagara controlling the movements of vessels in mid-Atlantic. This has not been done yet, but it will be done: every stage in the progress of electricity has shown that it is possible. Similarly from the first musical interval, useless as it would seem even for the colossal purpose of "selection," there has been evolved a system whose frontiers no man can demarcate; for if the things made by hands can be turned to account in man's necessity, surely the things made by his brain cannot be entirely in vain.

The scientific mind, however, has not been at pains to investigate those psychic manifestations which appertain to music. Even those who have evinced something of the true spirit of research have been disposed to overlook the question of development altogether, or have hesitated to commit themselves to an affirmation which might demolish their strong convictions as to the æsthetics of the art. Gurney, for instance, in his *Power of Sound*, pub-

lished in 1880, constantly speaks as if music had then reached its ultimate stage. He ignores the teaching of history, while the alteration in taste to which he refers should have cautioned him against his naïve enthusiasms. It is true that, in 1880, Wagner, the most prominent figure of the period, was but imperfectly known in England, still more imperfectly understood. Only in the preceding ten years, between 1870 and 1880, had first performances of his works been given in London, *Der Fliegende Holländer* in 1870, *Lohengrin* in 1875, *Tannhäuser* in 1876, and *Rienzi* in 1879. All this music was "modern" in 1880, belonging to a style which we do not to-day regard as characteristic of Wagner—yet Gurney's sympathies, if I read them aright, were not unreservedly with this movement.[1]

I will readily admit that this attitude is meet and proper provided that it is duly qualified and strictly limited to the contemporary view of things. But no man who has studied the evolution of music from Palestrina or Monteverde onwards can escape the

[1] It is not necessary to follow Gurney through his intricate and elaborate arguments, because a good deal has happened since his book appeared, and the point of view as regards music that was ultra-modern in his day has completely changed. But his work is instructive as showing what was the state of educated opinion on the eve of those developments of the art which now meet with general acceptance. His remarks about the tendencies of his time, are to be found on pp. 228–233, while on pp. 505–6 his reflections on Wagner give us insight into the state of his mind.

fact that, much as he may resent and censure the tendencies of his own day, the human faculty for music is being carried further and further, and that no strictures of his will stay its progress. The standard of criticism in music is not constant, and the composer who outstrips his predecessors has often to submit to a judgment based upon a comparison with work far below his own in intellectual development.

We have therefore to be on our guard against any generalisations which presuppose finality in music, for an analogy which seems to us at the time to be cogent may be overturned by a new discovery in science, leaving us still with nothing upon which to prop our conclusions but thin air. We are not helped out of our difficulties even by the highest scientific intellects. Darwin might have added to the sum of our knowledge of cerebral development had he not been impervious to the higher manifestations of the art. When *The Descent of Man* was published in 1871, a new phase of music was beginning, from which he might have drawn priceless inferences. Later on, in 1889, when Weissmann's *Thoughts upon the Musical Sense in Animals and Man* appeared, another phase, not in music alone, but in physical science, was dawning. Had those discoveries in chemistry and electricity, which are still waiting to be harnessed for the service

of man, been made before Weissmann had published his conclusions, he might not have been so precipitate in deciding that music was fixed, or, for that matter, "useless."

The biologist asserts that "utility" is of the first consideration in all questions of development, and if[1] "things produced with a view to pleasurable emotions are non-necessary," music, in the minds of some, may be one of them. But, granted that we cannot at present define its utility, it seems scarcely safe to assert that it must be placed irrevocably in the category of the "non-necessary." It may be difficult to specify in precise terms the particular need of man to which it ministers, but we have no right to conclude that because we cannot in so many words explain its use, music must therefore be useless. Those who have disposed of the matter on this ground have taken no account of the man who makes music—the composer. It is in him that we find a supreme example of the law of necessity. No man becomes a composer—I speak now of him whose aim is serious—as another might turn his attention to a profession or handicraft. He writes music because he must; he encounters the world under conditions which are at every step adverse and inimical to himself; the ease and comfort which might have been his had he indentured himself to any

[1] Gurney, p. 43.

of the conventional forms of slavery, he is willing to forgo, provided that he is free to express the thing that he hears with the "ear of the mind." He may realise the smallness of his gift; he may have within him the intuition that he has something which is not to be bought with gold. Music to him is his necessity, and he will not barter it for a mess of pottage. Surely it is no whim of nature to confer upon some men an exceptional cerebral endowment, incomprehensible though it be to their contemporaries and even their successors. The thing is there,—in an intense state of activity. No man has a right to quarrel with nature and say roughly, "This is useless." Its existence proclaims its utility, and the vital weakness lies not in the music, but in the man who cannot grasp this phase of mental energy.

We have not yet discovered why argon is ἀ-ἔργον, but the use for it is bound to come, and then its "worklessness" will cease. A vast department of chemistry has arisen to deal with the by-products of certain processes. Enormous industries have sprung from the discovery that the products of the destructive distillation of coal can be utilised. Scarcely a moment can pass without our coming in contact with their analytical or synthetical results in some form or another. The cyanide process for treating auriferous ore has extracted the gold, leaving merely sand as a "waste-product," of which no use can be

made at present. But some day another process will be discovered to convert this sand into durable stone, just as the slag from the smelting furnace has ceased to be a purposeless thing. In time to come something more than a metaphor and a new verb will be derived from the "scrap-heap." The lumber of obsolete machinery may—it almost certainly will—undergo molecular changes, converting it into metal of a higher quality, finer in temper, and fitted for an end infinitely more precise than that for which it was at first wrought.

All man's energies are being directed towards making the apparently useless become indispensable, and the old alchemists were not very wide of the mark when they sought to turn the baser metal into pure gold. Mankind has awakened to the fact that there is more in the test-tube than the traditional "smell and explosion" of the schoolboy's experiments.

If man's many inventions have found a time and purpose for everything under the sun in the sphere of tangible things, shall we hesitate to assert that the purpose of music must one day be set forth?

We have the unimpeachable records of a faculty which cannot be exercised without a cerebral endowment immeasurably greater to-day than it was twenty years ago, and this faculty, it cannot be insisted upon

too frequently, is an expression of mental energy which has put forth its activities only within the last two hundred years. To prove its utility at present is as difficult as to disprove its non-necessity.

Considering, therefore, its incredibly long period of incubation, its slow development, its sudden rise, its continuation by leaps and bounds, I feel that, however amazing its state is, we are merely on the Threshold of an art which, sooner perhaps than we suspect, will attain undreamt of dimensions.

Many strange paradoxes are to be met with in a study of the art; inexplicable contradictions arise which seem to set at naught the plan and purpose of nature. The temper of an age may clamour too hastily for the recognition of a style which spends itself in a violent outburst of brilliancy. The true perspective, the perspective of history, must always be kept in view. In our own time Wagner may seem as far in advance of Beethoven as Beethoven was in advance of Scarlatti. Some to-day may place Beethoven on the shelf among the musical antiques,—at a later day others may perceive, with the progress of the musical sense, little difference between Wagner and Beethoven. Already Wagner, the daring revolutionist, seems to many to have gone scarcely a step further than Meyerbeer. In our own time we may be witnessing a strange act of profligacy on the part of nature, the sowing of her wild oats, the purging of mankind as

regards his musical sense, so that in time to come, humanity will be the fitter to receive and cherish music in some ampler measure. Those who regard the gift of music as a sacred trust, imposing obligations of conduct and of good life, can only hope that we are even now merely in an embryonic stage, and that its hour is not yet at hand.

For consider one of many points. Nature has conferred upon some men a mysterious faculty which can be exercised only under conditions more than unfavourable,—they are often deliberately hostile,—to close concentration and mental effort. If we accept that side of history which is trustworthy, there are not a few composers whom we can cite as examples of the survival of the unfittest. Yet it is through many of these that the inscrutable problem of sound has been transmitted. Across the page of musical history there flit men whom we would not associate in character with the art which is called divine. Music, like every other manifestation of human effort, has its ignoble side, but we need not dwell upon it here.

If, as I firmly believe, the third part of music is yet to come forth, whereby its meaning is made clear and its ethics established under a new dispensation, it is not to the spendthrift and the profligate, to the man destitute of honour or devoid of respect for sacred

ties, that we are to look for the expounding of its Gospel.

I believe that, viewed in correlation with man's other faculties, music is still in its infancy, and that the utmost effort of the most notable composer of our own time or of past time, will be but an iota in the inscription recording man's endeavour towards its accomplishment. It will be to a future generation what our present music would have been to a Hellene of the age of Pericles,—an aspect of art unconceived and inconceivable.

CHAPTER II

PRIMITIVE CONDITIONS

In Music we find, not the persistence and continuity of a human endowment which attained its full vigour centuries ago, but the efflorescence of a mental state which, after remaining throughout the ages in an embryonic condition, has suddenly burst forth under our eyes into consciousness and complexity.

It would be idle, indeed, to deny that some "music" can be traced back as far as human knowledge has penetrated, but what is here emphasised is the extraordinary quickening of an art which up to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was in a rudimentary state, and then, in the nineteenth, displayed an amazing rapidity of growth.

In the history of man there is nothing comparable with this: in no recorded age has a human faculty presented in so short a time so swift a development. If we contrast the highest musical achievement even of a hundred years ago with the music which we

have to-day, we see an advance in thought and imagination which is almost incredible, and it is only to be explained on the supposition that a new faculty has come into existence in recent years. We may assume that the centre for music in the brain consists of a ganglion of nerve-cells which has remained in an embryonic state for countless centuries, until through some stimulus it has acquired characters sufficiently definite to entitle it to be regarded as an accessory sense.

There is nothing extravagant in this assertion when, apart from music, we study even those superficial modifications of type which show how the human race from time to time has undergone imperceptible adjustment to outward conditions. For there is a ceaseless fluctuation, too minute to be reckoned from one score of generations to another, and the variation of the faculties goes on constantly. Persistence of type in the human organism is only relative, according to the data at our disposal, and while we accept the statement that the broader principles of structure have not altered within human knowledge, we are not in a position so secure as to assert that there has been no aberration from the main type in the case of organs whose functions have yet to be delimited and assigned. We cannot say that man's powers of assimilation have been invariable for thousands of years, in face

of the fact that the human frame adapts itself to its environment and that toleration of certain conditions establishes a functional habit. We are aware of this variation all over the globe, determined as it must be by circumstance and climate, and no one can say that a minute investigation of organic structures would not show racial peculiarities as marked as those characteristic "naked-eye" appearances which have so deep an ethnological significance.

It is well known that the sense of direction, the weather sense and the sense of space, have ceased to be indispensable to men living in certain environments. The sense of smell, the acuity of vision and of hearing, present great variations, and the advantage still rests with those who have not emerged into what is called, for want of a more exact term, the civilised state. Those nations which have suffered by this deterioration are in blissful ignorance of what they have lost. The impairment of one sense, more particularly that of vision, generally brings about a sharpening of the touch and the ear, for nature's law of compensation is just and the balance between the senses is evenly regulated. In other directions, the occlusion or obliteration of an organ brings about in certain cases a reciprocal development which carries on the work.

It is difficult to imagine a world in which no human being possesses one of the five senses. It

is as difficult to conceive of some expression of mental energy which at present is in a rudimentary state. The air is full of scientific problems awaiting elucidation and acceptance. Every hour brings some secret of nature into the open day, but the intellectual effort is directed towards extraneous things, and despite the highly specialised functions that are brought to bear upon science—despite the instances of bewilderingly brilliant mental endowments, it cannot be said that these are manifestations of cerebral forces which only recently have come into activity.

When, however, we turn to music we find in its vitality and the wideness of its application a new mental process, and it has only latterly been brought to such a condition of energy and delicacy of adjustment that its claims to be regarded as an offshoot of the senses can be advanced.

Possibly in some coming age we shall be regarded as in a rudimentary state of development by those endowed with a new faculty not even foreshadowed in our own time. No one can say that the day will not come when from the glimmerings of those metapsychical phenomena which still labour in the toils and trammels of charlatanry, some new expression of mental energy will dawn. For we have seen in physics the discovery of a kind of light which makes opaque bodies transparent, we have seen the

isolation of another form of light which is ever in a state of activity. That the converse of the one, and an antagonistic form of the other, may actually exist, as yet undiscovered, is no illogical conjecture. Even now we may be unconsciously passing through some mental state preparing us for the manifestations of some new cerebral force, so that when it comes we shall have already been broken into a state of complete receptivity.

Necessity and compensation are everywhere in nature. Music may have reached its present stage to replace something which has passed out of man's ken as stealthily and as gradually as the art has come forth. Nothing is useless; many an argon has wandered "work-less" till the moment came for its absorption into the machinery of life; many an idle thing has been flung into the air to fall at last when man's necessity clamoured for it, then claimed it as its own. One of these "argons" may be music; it may be to many a purposeless thing or at best contrived for pleasure, to excite the senses or to lead man to frivolous pursuits. But it is inconceivable that the product of a human faculty should reach a complexity which demands a cerebral apparatus balanced with the utmost nicety, and yet have for its object only some superficial stimulus. It may be that the musical sense was evolved by way of compensation for some other function of the

auditory apparatus attenuated or even abolished. It may be that in nature's plan, as man's needs for self-protection became less urgent owing to an alteration of his surroundings, some change in his hearing took place. A new environment, a new habit not only of body but of mind, would necessarily insist upon functional modifications.

Civilisation exacts a price for the supposed favours which it confers, and the further refinement is carried, the more difficult and complex become the primary offices of humanity. But if we could lay down a norm for mankind we might find that nature's formula is fixed, and that the mean has to be preserved at all costs. We may sterilise our surroundings to the ultimate exclusion of every known micrococcus, but the same scientific spirit which discovers a way to protect the human species from one class of grievous afflictions is at the same time inventing something else to "benefit" humanity, towards which humanity has to contribute a poll-tax in the shape of dire catastrophes.

It may be that this faculty for music is an aberration, rising swiftly to maturity, expending its energies in a brief cycle of centuries, to fade away exhausted and disappear from man's knowledge or man's chronicles. If such variation is possible in the world of living things, may we not speculate in the sphere of the mind and ask whether in some lost,

unrecorded age man was endowed with faculties which, too, are lost and unrecorded? Or, on the other hand, may not this faculty be only the threshold which we are to cross on our way to a more spacious mansion? Or, again, is this musical faculty part only of a larger sense which awaits development? For, placing together for the moment the two aspects of music, its creation and its appreciation, is there not a third aspect yet to come into view, namely, the comprehension that is something deeper than appreciation, the discovery of its correlation with other forces in life, its establishment upon an ethical basis?

These speculations concern the future, and will be dealt with at a later stage. Meanwhile we are first occupied with the past, and in all that concerns evolution we go back not once but many times to primæval conditions.

Man had to guard against or propitiate three enemies, Nature, Death, and Man himself. He sheltered himself from the storm, he wrought spells, he made himself arms of offence or defence. Two of his foes were immovable, but they might be kept at bay. So the cave came, or the lake-dwelling, impregnable as far as man could make them, while his weapons were chips of flint laboriously hewn in an age when the cloven intermuscular septa of arm and back and thigh stood for his cunning as

the deep convolutions of grey matter stand in our own time, and then as now the necessity was all. The dread foe was death, and as a creature of religious observance primæval man, like the Bushman of to-day, may claim to stand within the pale.[1]

But death was not to be gainsaid, and to make one life long, the lives of many were necessary. Is it not recorded in Holy Writ? Then from the structure of the windy cave he built a house, with well-knit solid walls, and reared a roof to shield him from the sun, and then perchance in some misshapen stone he saw a semblance of a living thing, some comrade, friend, antagonist, or mate, and roughly with a sharpened edge of flint he scraped away till nature's curious mark came near, by man's endeavour, man himself. But just as strife is born of covetousness, so, over this, man strove with his primæval neighbour, or attempted to excel in his rude way his adversary's art. Then time claimed record, seasons in and out, the solstices, the moon's eclipse, the cataracts of stars, the coming of the snow, the

[1] We may well contrast our observance of what we call "religion" with that of the Australian aborigines. Ours, at the utmost, amounts to about three-quarters of an hour on fifty-two occasions in the year. Theirs amounts, not in hours, but in days, to more than half the year, devoted to propitiation, to ceremonial, to the initiation of man and woman into the mysteries of life. The Bushman believes in many gods and gives his whole attention to them. Is our zeal wiser than his?

wakening year, the blossoming of earth, were things all pressing too large in man's existence to pass unheeded. The bleaching tusk of ivory became compliant to the pressure of the flint, and from the scratches recording time some line that missed its aim curled itself into the shape of a familiar thing easily identified. Then a grim smudge of coloured clay, transferred from human skin, the primæval canvas, to the tusk, added a little more to the meaning. This accomplishment passed from being a thing to kill time, and became a thing to create time, and man's need for a new outlet for his energy increased and multiplied. From the rough hut, from the scratched tusk, from the need for warmth even in the sterile climes which to-day we call the tropics, came another need, namely, fire. Amid the incandescent embers in the sand a transparent pebble was found to concentrate the sun's rays upon a pinch of dried grass till all was ablaze. Or else the whirling of friable wood in a more intractable socket swept the movement into flame, and sun and fire in turn became man's necessity. Then each was applied to challenge the old enemy Death.

The whirring of the fibre in its socket, the moan of the wind and the whip of the rain, awakened in man those powers of mimicry which no assaults against the facts of evolution can counteract or

destroy, for the infant of three months old throws back at every turn to an unrecorded ancestry.

Then man for the first time sang.

In the development of man's faculties there is a parallelism with the development of nature. The great biological plan reckons with no mere accident, no fortuitous offset. What throwing forward there exists, is a warning of a type to follow, the anticipation of a higher type of evolution ; and just as man's faculties show fluctuation, so, too, we find it in nature. Even to-day we are provided without much exertion with a complete retrospect from the glacial period to our own century. In the heart of Africa is planted Ruwenzori, the last virgin summit, crowned with its primæval ice. There we see, stage by stage —and the stretches are easy—the frozen zone passing to the great lakes, the ripples of sand with their clusters of herbage, the lapse of the waters, the marks of their varying levels left as furrows on the sides of the valleys, the forests that sprang from the atomies of seeds blown on the wind, the bed cut by the receding waters, the effluent stream, the great river, the mighty torrent.

There, almost at a glance, we can study the processes by which nature, with curious cunning, models

the globe, and in a month's journey we can witness changes which in our own clime were spread over centuries.

So, too, as regards human faculties. Down the great Nile there came custom, tradition, religion—there came things made by man's brain. A little voyage, and on a scanty spit of land the seeds found anchorage. There, upon a rugged height, were reared two temples—the one man's effort of resistance and defence, the other his monument to propitiation and ultimate compliance, and the worshippers therein called themselves Hellenes.

Span the gulf between the Ice Age and our own day : span the gap between the minds that created the Temple at Karnak and the brain which makes the music of our own day : measure the distance between the teaching of those who justified the Parthenon as a symbol of man's relation to his neighbour and the teaching (shall we call it ?) of to-day, and at once the inconceivable distance between the evolution of the philosophic faculty and the musical faculty is apparent.

Again, trace the line from Ruwenzori to the Delta, and what remains ? Nothing but water and sand, and on the banks of the ancient stream, on the sea-shore, there are cast up, not the fragments of shipwrecked man, not the scum of a transitory

age, not the jetsam of refractory seas, but the imperishable thumb-marks of man. From the thin source to the thundering cataract, down the deep gullies to the scattered waters of the Delta, the vestiges of man's thought, of man's deeper questionings, are few—only there remain the relics of his handiwork, his monuments, his celebrations, his feasts, his tombs.

Gone is he who sought to tell the truth by stars: gone is he who sought to install the universe by numbers. Schools perish, theories are upraised only to be levelled to the ground by new antagonisms: the axiom of yesterday is the postulate of to-day, to be held in doubt by the theorem of to-morrow. Now and then we are startled into the past with breathless suddenness, as when we look at the worn little slippers of tiny feet that pattered over the cobbles of Heliopolis four thousand years ago. Sometimes we touch the actual past with but one life that bridges over the immense space. In one of our recent Egyptian campaigns a private of a Highland regiment was idly playing with the sand of his scanty entrenchment, and as the grains ran through his fingers, first one thin disc of silver, then another, came to light, till the tale was twenty, and he slipped them into his sporran. Months passed, and these tokens, clean sharp pennies of Alexander the

Great, the hoard of some stricken hoplite of a forgotten age, passed through the bank in a prosaic Scottish town.

To make the span complete, the seeds of grain, stored as part of the propitiation to a shadowy deity of five thousand years ago, even now may be fulfilling their purpose, unharrowed by the envious tooth of time.

CHAPTER III

THE HELLENIC IDEAL

If we wish to take a survey of the art of music in relation to the other manifestations of man's thought, we must go as far back as its records allow, and in order to arrive at an understanding of its progress from a primitive state towards its present development, we may take the other arts as a basis for comparison. In the history of man music is the youngest of the arts, and what is known as "classical music" is the work of men who are still, as far as time is concerned, our contemporaries.

It can boast of no past like architecture, no ancestry like sculpture or painting. The secrets of these are, broadly speaking, revealed to the world, for while from time to time bright geniuses have arisen who have stamped their individuality upon their work, the style and form were there before them, and the spirit of a thousand years is visible in the modern examples of sculpture, while the great masters of painting had

become classics at a time when Music was quite in its infancy.

Music, indeed, has no history to look back upon, no interminable pedigree to be traced : its heraldry calls for no minute quarterings : its ancestry is of yesterday. It has no royal progenitors like Pheidias or Myron, no Parthenon to house its deities : music has no Luxor, no Athens, no Rome to which its ministers can turn : it can point to no imperishable monuments which have looked across the expanse of centuries. For while the eyes of the world saw in plastic art, more than two thousand years ago, what they see to-day being produced by modern hands and modern minds, the ear of the world cannot detect in modern music any sounds that recall a past age.

What music has accomplished, it has done in the last two centuries : sculpture, on the other hand, is not far from where it stood in the Golden Age of Pericles.

Let us seek some references. We have not reached the centenary of Haydn's or Beethoven's death. It is only about one hundred and fifty years since Bach and Handel died.

On the other hand, it is six thousand six hundred years since the Great Pyramid was built.

Two thousand five hundred years have passed since the Parthenon arose to watch over Athens.

The Pantheon at Rome was in existence shortly before the Christian era began.

Tintoretto, Botticelli, Paul Veronese, Holbein, Rembrandt, Michael Angelo, Donatello, Benvenuto Cellini, Velasquez, all completed their life-work before Bach was born. Solitary years in the history of music are represented by centuries in the other arts.

The modern painter, therefore, like his brother sculptor, like his brother architect, turns back at every step to the work of men who accomplished in past times what he attempts to do to-day. He has to revert to masters who had brought his art to maturity while Music was trying to find its feet. Everything has been anticipated for these men. They go back to the frieze of the Parthenon, to the Vatican Museum or the Louvre, to the Gothic Cathedrals, to the Galleries of the Prado, to find that, however lusty their voices may be, they can only awaken echoes, learning no doubt from the best, challenging with vigour, but receiving as answer the eternal smile of a Seti, of a Mona Lisa, or of a Venus of Melos.

Wherever we turn amid the visible manifestations of the Greek mind in sculpture and architecture, we find that it was able to express itself as clearly and perfectly as any thought of the last five hundred years. In the other arts, therefore, we have to deal

with canons which to-day are fixed, formulated as surely as the module which regulates the classical orders of architecture. The sculptor cannot ignore the Greeks any more than a language can disdain its grammar. Architecture, too, had reached a perfection while the world was still young. Everything that we know of Greek art demonstrates the fact that the means for embodying mental conceptions in marble or in bronze were as adequate in ancient days as they are now. The artist's scope was not limited by mechanical problems. The technique of building, the processes which gave impulse to the plastic arts are in many instances the despair of modern imitators : there are some arts which are lost : and while we may not see the tints exactly as the Old Masters laid them upon their panels and canvases, still with the examples before us, we may conclude that their eye for contrast and design was not less subtle than that of modern painters.

Music, however, is to some extent at the mercy of the means used to reproduce it, despite the composer's outstripping the interpretative facilities of his time. Thus it is that the craftsman, by being compelled to keep pace with the composer, has stimulated and encouraged him to extend the realm of sound.[1]

The progress of music has been from time to time exemplified by the progress of the methods employed

[1] See later pp. 140, 141, 194.

to express it, and the gradual advance of composer and craftsman in technique has prevented the art from making any of those retrogressions which have blurred the annals of the other arts. If music has displayed any retrogressions in the past two centuries, they have been too minute to be compared with those that have occurred in the ten times two centuries of sculpture and architecture.

Such crisis and lysis as the arts manifest is an enigma. The "period of decline" is always a marked feature,—the receding of an art into decrepitude and second childhood seems to point to an exhaustion of man's brain, to a resolution of his faculties, which both give pause for the accumulation of energy in another direction. No such pause, however, has been shown by music, and the absence of any periodic exhaustion of the musical faculty strikingly emphasises in one direction the unique nature of its development. It is difficult to explain, for instance, why the mechanical skill demanded for the chiselling of marble, for bronze casting, or for the cutting of the Syracusan coins,—those minute tokens of gold and silver which demonstrate the history of the Greek States no less than the rhythmic rise and fall of the art,—should not have found an outlet in the contriving of musical instruments. Specimens of cylindrical tubes used for musical performances are extant, and it is curious that they

were not advanced a stage beyond that of the primitive reed cut by a shepherd-boy. The technique for casting a finger in bronze was applicable to the making of a wind instrument, yet with all that the Hellenic mind gave to the considerations of music there was no attempt to justify or to realise theory.

We are aware that there was no reticence in matters pertaining to the philosophy of music. In the treatises which have come down to us we find expositions of theory concerning the scale, and the mathematical relation of notes to one another, but as music, ἡ μουσίκη τέχνη, was closely allied to the expressive arts which found their goal in Greek Tragedy, it did not exist as we understand it, as an art in itself. It was the art which concerned the Muses, and comprised Rhetoric, Declamation, Poetry and the Drama,—such manifestations of human thought, in fact, as could be conveyed by means of the voice and gesture without the aid of mechanical appliances. Indeed, while the sculptor transferred movement and action to stone or bronze, the man who cultivated this "Art of the Muses" was himself his own statue. The human voice alone expressed music as we know it, and no records have been preserved showing instrumental development apart from the most rudimentary accompaniments to odes or songs.

The possession of a scale naturally led theorists to examine and discuss it,—with its mere existence the Greek mind could not rest satisfied,—but if any practical deductions were arrived at, the records have perished, possibly in that greatest calamity that ever befell the human race, the burning of the Alexandrian Library.

Music, however, in its essence, needed only a memory to retain it and a voice to transmit it, and it is not at all probable that the art reached a development much higher than that which we can study to-day with the documents at our command. The written music that is extant is pre-eminently vocal, with a very elementary form of instrumental accompaniment.

Of the scale itself, how it originated and passed into the form which the Greeks recognised as a determinate fact, we can only make deductions based upon our experiences of music still young in its development, such as we gain from the study of other races. What man in his faculties must have been in past ages we can see to-day in races which exist as the wreckage of prehistoric times.

The earliest form of music was but an exaggeration of the cadences of speaking, caused by an exalted state of mind. Two or three sounds, dwelt upon because of their being regarded as agreeable in their utterance and pleasant to the ear, grew to

be identified with certain emotions, and in this way a conventionality of *meaning* was arrived at.

These sounds were preceded by rhythm. The determination of something resembling metre, whereby the accent should fall on certain syllables with some attempt at regularity, seems to have been an early step in music, if we may accept the primitive conditions still maintained at the present day as at one time more common to mankind. The tendency is for cries of all sorts, when uttered among large assemblages, to resolve themselves into rhythmic phrases. The shouts of battle, as threats or signals, the exhortations of ritual, the laments of defeat or death, the triumphant pæans of victory, seem to demand unison, or unanimity in utterance. At the same time, the movements of the body in toil, of the limbs in the orgiastic dance, the sounds of women's implements at the loom or in grinding corn, the stroke of the hammer on the anvil, suggest a definite sequence of measures, and this becomes conventionalised.

It follows that expression when conveyed by gesture tended towards some early effort at dancing, and thus the rhythmic beating together of two pieces of wood, the movement of the limbs, the uttering of shouts as the excitement grew more violent, came to be identified with, and significant of, mental phases.

How long the world had lived before such elementary sounds were strung together so as to form a scale no man can tell. With the history of musical development before us, we are impressed with the fact that ages must have passed before the ear could have become educated so as to crave for some note which would bridge over the gap between two primary sounds, and nothing conveys the idea of the immensity of Time more than the knowledge that there are races to-day whose only music consists of two or three sounds constantly recurring in monotonous chant to the beating of resonant substances. No one knows when a scale will be evolved from these two or three sounds, or when the musical sense will feel the need for more notes to give a sense of completeness to the savage chant.

To-day, when all ends of the world lie within the compass of a brief journey, when nations jostle one another for want of elbow-room, we learn from music the significance of space and the absence of intercommunication in the youth of the world. For the evolution of a musical system seems to be at the mercy of racial peculiarities. Among the Eastern nations the varieties of the musical scale are infinite and minute, and examples of absolute correspondence are rare.

Although the Chinese seem tc have anticipated the Greeks in formulating a philosophic system of

music, like the Greeks, they did not, as far as we know, carry it much beyond its speculative aspect.

European nations alone have insisted upon a definite relationship of note to note such as is demanded by harmony, but, as will be shown later on, this craving for something to sustain the melody was a long time in making itself felt. Despite their theorising on the subject of note-relationship, it is strange that the Greeks did not put into practice that which such a study suggested, namely, harmony.

To us who are accustomed to the accompanied melody, who accept unaccompanied notes only at rare intervals, and then entirely for the sake of contrast and relief, it is unaccountable that the ear of the Greek was satisfied with melody and rhythm alone. For however correctly and purely the voice may give forth melody, the ear, in its present state of development, demands something more. In those whose faculty is highly trained, the appropriate harmony is supplied by instinct in the mind, while melody and harmony are so intimately associated that a rich harmonic effect may suggest the melodic conception. To such an extent is this the case that tunes written by persons who are in a musical sense illiterate can almost invariably be detected by the narrowness of their scope for varied harmonisation. In this category are to be found many folk-songs, and there are tunes peculiar to certain countries which

are so unscientific in their construction that they admit only of the baldest harmonic accompaniment.

The large number of Greek songs that has been collected impresses us with the proportions to which lyric poetry must have grown. What has become familiar to us under the generic title of "Greek Anthology" is but a handful of blossoms plucked from a wide expanse of garden radiant with flowers.

When we know what an important part the lyre played in Hellenic civic life, it is amazing that almost every vestige of its music has disappeared. The folk-songs that we can study show that, from the games of the nursery to the formalities of the banquet, there was no phase of social existence without its appropriate lyric. The variety of their metres was so infinite that there could not have been only a few stereotyped rhythms or tunes to which the words were adapted ; indeed, compared with our own folk-songs that are modern in a comparative sense, they present an intricacy which could not easily be confined within definite sections of bars or formal melodic statements. In this respect at least the mental faculty was well equipped, although we must still regard the Greek musical sense as in an elementary state owing to the absence of harmony.

While the Greeks had reached the highest attainments in eye-training and mind-training, as shown by their works of art, by their dialectics and their

poetry, the existing records of their music go to prove that their sense of hearing lacked the faculty of discerning the finer shades and subtleties of sound. This is a fact of great significance in our inquiry, when taken in connection with the extraordinary balance between the eye, hand and brain, which the great masterpieces of sculpture and architecture manifest.

There is, however, a philosophic explanation, apart from all questions of the evolution of the musical sense, for the almost total absence of harmony in Greek music. I have already said that in the Hellenic mind music was inseparably connected with the voice. Now the voice can only utter one note at a time; it cannot produce a chord. With the imperfect means of performing upon imperfect instruments, the voice was regarded as the predominant element, and since it of itself could deal only with a sequence of single notes strung together to form a melody, any secondary series of notes was deemed superfluous.

But beyond this technical matter of sound-production we may seek for other reasons why Greek music remained an arbitrary convention. We must remember that the Hellenic mind identified everything in life with the religious idea. Sculpture served as no meaningless symbol erected to gratify a passing fancy: it was the index of the glorious past

of the State, the abiding record of an heroic age. Architecture gave religion a fixed seat in countless temples devoted to the worship of the Greek divinities. The Drama and the Panathenaic contests were in essence religious festivals, and in Greek Tragedy the chorus chanted its strophe and antistrophe to strains as conventional as those used in Christian and Jewish ritual.

If, then, the theistic idea was closely identified with the arts, it is natural to infer that, as sculpture and architecture were enrolled in the service of religion and remained unalterable in their character, formal music was also sacrosanct. Its structure was scrupulously preserved, not so much for the narrow use of ritual—although this would have been convenient at festivals attended by people from widely separated districts—as for the broader application of the principle of religion in its purest sense, the principle that cements all races together. Any modification or development of music would therefore have consigned it to a "profane" use, that is to say, it would have removed it from the sacred precincts of the temple.

With all respect for the instinct which controlled such principles, we of to-day, who are witnessing the extraordinary advance which music has made, can only regard Greek music as primitive in comparison with the other achievements of the Hellenic mind.

We might take an Athenian of olden days to the British Museum or to the Louvre, and he would find himself in understanding and sympathy with what he saw, but at a concert of modern orchestral music he would be dazed.

In his own time, however, he found ready to his hand and mind the complete equipment for expressing his philosophy. All the wealth of man's brain, embodied in sculpture and architecture, was his "eternal possession": wherever he turned his eyes these silent witnesses of dignified ideals impressed him with a sense of order, and supplied him with all that was needful to guide him in accordance with the Hellenic principle. His great teachers pointed out to him the duties of citizenship, and enforced the State's duty towards him: the πολιτεία was an actuality and not an empty formula to be left to a section of the community as a mere matter of business: for his life and for his living he was able to command every essential, and he attained his ideal of completeness—but without what we to-day call Music.

CHAPTER IV

ROMAN AND GOTH

The music that Greece bequeathed to the world consisted of a series of notes forming a scale, and this legacy was to suffice for human needs through the long stretch of the early centuries of the Christian era. The brain seems to have accepted the scale as the finality of musical expression, and any further curiosity regarding it was purely in the domain of theory. We have to traverse an immense space of time before we find evidence of a craving for what we call harmony, and we pass from century to century without detecting the faintest change.

Stated in cold figures, the scale came into use about 700 B.C., and, beyond being subdivided into modes, remained unaltered till past the tenth century of the Christian era, while the first attempts at harmony were recorded about 900 A.D. For sixteen hundred years, therefore, the musical sense remained stationary at one primitive stage of development.

It would be outside the scope of this inquiry to follow the minute transitions of intellectual effort during this period, but some comparisons and reflections inevitably arise.

If we stand, as it were, at the first decade of the Christian era and look back for 450 years, we behold the golden age of Pericles: if we look forward for the same space of time, we see the Vandals in Rome and the beginning of the Dark Ages. The needle has swung round and the poles are reversed—man's zenith on the one hand, on the other his nadir.

If we join the procession of the centuries from the remote first Olympiad, or from the Year of the Founding of the City, we mark on the way the Finger-Posts of man's achievement, clustering more numerously when Athens stood at her height—more rarely when her art declined—again more frequently in the ripe Augustan age. We are swept with the crowd up that staircase of the Praetorium in Jerusalem from which the Roman Procurator commanded his lictors to read out the sentence of the Sanhedrim, a sentence which he, a Roman, was powerless to annul. Then we meet with one other Finger-Post, the index not of what man had done but of what man was to do. The Sign was unheeded. Some over-zealous scribe, in later years, may have sought to justify his own profession of faith by a gloss,

giving a personal view of the great Fact which quietly, but no less surely, assailed degenerate theocracies tottering to their doom, but the import to the world of the crucifixion of a Jew for blasphemy was then of a littleness that even Pilate may well have forgotten all about it.

Rome, indeed, was unmoved, and strove to safeguard her ancient prestige ; but her very name, which in past times had stood for conquest and empire, and for an imperishable monument in literature, was soon to signify another very different power over man's estate. The change came about imperceptibly, for the post-Augustan age was by no means a barren one, and Rome was already dancing to her destruction before the decline of letters took place. Mankind, too, was nearing its darkest hour.

It may have been that the transference of the seat of power from Athens to Rome had inoculated a section of the Latin race with the mere dregs of a culture that eventually led, as happens in the athlete too finely trained, to restlessness, to a craving for change and new things, ultimately to decadence. It was life itself that had grown hectic. Whatever the cause, the effect was there. Mental refinement brought to that perilous stage when the exact balance between mind and body is upset, passed imperceptibly into luxury of surroundings, and the perversion that followed leapt quickly to a state in which the senses

pry into sanctities and man's respect for man ceases to be a bulwark.

So it is that despite some voices crying in the wilderness, vainly endeavouring to shepherd each flock into its own fold, we thrust our way through the Forum, where Empress condescends to gladiator, courtesan to him who holds the reins of state; we are jostled by the impudent comedian, by the boxer braggart of his scars and misshapen ears, as they wait their time to throw back, at the word of some ignoble wench, the favours of a patrician house, while chin-chucked dancer snatches for a whim the laurels from an imperial brow.

With all these there is no music—shall we not wish to think that this most sacred art was held in dumbness till the horrid age was past?

Meanwhile the vitiating influences spread. There was little choice between early Christian austerity and the profligacy that sped so easily into channels studiously prepared for it. The ancient Roman ideal of virtue, that which came of manliness, was forgotten, and the grim she-wolf upon the Capitol became the theme for sorry jest.

Tradition was derided, morale became a by-word; the very root and stock of race, the Latin tongue, was threatened. The generous Augustan flow was becoming sullied on its journey with those contaminations that spring from coarser soil, and its

sanctity was being profaned. Full need was there to deepen the *Cloaca Maxima*. As degeneracy spread, the bed-rock of idiom, the formal speech, altered. Just as the nobler expressions of man in life, his aims and ideals, became dismembered and corrupt, so the common currency that was, as it were, the matrix for thought, lost the stateliness and dignity of its measure. The clipt phrase came into fashion ; as life grew more tense and hardened beneath the strain, the mind had to distort that ampler mode, which in more splendid times found a wide freedom for its crystallisation, and a fit season for its utterance. So speech conveyed the garbage of man's thought, and it mattered little in what ill-assorted assemblages it found its use.

Thus went Rome down until the time was ripe for her chastisement. Then suddenly the dread visitation fell. The avenging sword plied with double edge against those who had squandered their birthright, and in the hands of the dreaded Goth it swept with twofold meaning. Vain had been the speech of those whose comfortable ease had lulled them to the thin security of aphorism, for aphorism is but a friable entrenchment when the ruthless hordes stand at the challenge a spear's throw off. But habit is a curious thing ; the niceties of thought are to the philosopher so absorbing that he will sit spinning his web of paradox, of altruism, of senti-

mental theories of universal peace and goodwill, till some brawny foe puts in practice *his* methods of barbarism, and with a blow cleaves at once the skull and its hair-splitting contents, and dismisses the dreamer from this scene.

War has her victories no less than peace, and it is war, red-handed, that ultimate throe of human energy, that kneads the universe. Necessity on the one hand, on the other the power of resistance, set forth the boundaries. The inner strength can oppose the outward pressure, but without the most minute adjustment so as to resist impact and the cumulative force of external onset, the fabric may as well be but a spider's web.

Read the lesson as we may, the very stones that paved the Appian Way cried out in protest against the relaxation of those observances that made her and her sister, the Via Sacra, stand for the ancestry and dignity of race. Paris, it was said in later times, was worth a mass, but Rome in the decrepitude of empire was merely a thing to be gambled away for a sensation, and well it was that the gods had loaded the dice. We can reconstruct the nobler Roman's thoughts as he saw his *imperium in imperio* flung on the table, the last stake of all. Some welcome quietus from a blade roughly forged in the north ended for ever his anxiety on that score ; but every one who is stirred by love of country,

by the august pageantry of race, can understand what a man of these stately times suffered when some trumpery idol of straw was held up to conceal the lares and penates of his auspicious line.

Meanwhile the subdued voices of persecuted refugees in the catacombs, the deep-felt utterances of those convinced of the Via Salutis, that other Routine Row uncharted on the maps of ancient Rome, were gathering strength and swelling into one vast tone which was to resound through the great arenas and shake the penetralia of empire. But while there were instances of an amazing toleration shown to those very Galileans who had taken no middle course between profaning the time-honoured deities and setting up the worship of an unseen god, there were also ample opportunities for securing that martyrdom for which triumphant zeal or an exalted vanity fitted many a candidate. Even in its earliest days the new religion showed itself a meet soil for those tares of schism which throughout its growth have ever sprung up into a wild and thorny entanglement. Christianity drew its converts from all classes, and it is not surprising that in Rome, the focus and umbo of caste, those who formed the earliest communities should have interpreted from different points of view the humility enjoined in the name of the Great Founder.

Enthusiasm may level all for a time, but in the end man's primal instinct for dominion and power overrides transient phases of ecstasy. In the numbers of those who professed the new faith there were found slave, plebeian, freedman, patrician ; but the fervour which inspired them to display an unbroken front in the name of their Master was powerless to annul the established rights of citizenship, of authority, of submission and bondage, which had prevailed for centuries. Simplicity was one of the merits of the Christian Rule, yet for its enforcement and observance a complicated machinery was necessary and the results were scarcely harmonious. Austerity carried to excess passed with facility to violent reaction, and catechumen and pagan alike found their level on the plane where *natura usque recurret.* The adherents of the new religion, further, steeped of old time in the traditions of divination, leant for guidance on those signs and portents which were ingrained in their marrow ; and superstition, the lineal heir of augury, found its soil ready tilled and watered.

So too it was with matters of ritual. The Mosaic order, the Roman habit of worship and of feasts, the garment and fringe, nay, even the phylactery of antagonistic creeds, of fetish and totem, of tribal cult and threadbare symbolism, all came to be pressed into the service of the Church, and were

grafted on to the green sapling sprung from the rod of Jesse.

Among these borrowings from the rituals of other religious dynasties was music, and it took its place as an indispensable adjunct to Christian worship. The use of passages from Scripture had been absorbed from Hebrew observance, and with this came no doubt the ancient music of the Temple, while gradually some form of ceremonial was accepted as convenient for devotion. It was in the Eastern division of the early Christian Church that music was first organised, and, even before the fall of the Roman Empire, various schools had arisen for the cultivation of the art as a necessary appanage of ecclesiasticism. Imported into the West, it found its patron in Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, who, according to tradition, established it upon a system derived from that of the Greeks.

Custom and expediency as well as memory had fixed upon the Greek modes as appropriate, and, for the expression of devotional feeling, habit preserved what was most familiar. Thus the music of the ritual was set in order—music that may have been in part composed for the Office, but which, quite as likely, was derived from songs peculiar to districts and allotted to various portions of the year.

We do not find records of the introduction of a

style which varied from the Greek formula. There was, indeed, an acceptance of convention, without any sign of an impulse from within. Nor were the conditions favourable for any great movement in literature or in art.

Close upon one another came three pregnant events: Ambrose was at Milan constructing his ecclesiastical style of music when Jerome began his translation of the Bible, known as the Vulgate. Fifty years later the scourge of the Vandals fell upon Rome. But even the bondage of that calamity was scarcely more intolerable than the servitude which had already risen within the people themselves.

When idleness and sloth, and, for that matter, personal uncleanliness, were raised to a plane of enviable sanctity, when man was beguiled from his duty to his kindred, and slipped into selfish abstractions for some altogether visionary grace which the Church professed to confer, when learning was obstructed as too dangerous a privilege to be exercised without the control of a self-constituted authority, it is not to be wondered at that the implements of culture grew rusty. Even the compiling of the Vulgate was looked upon as subversive of the Good Estate of the Catholic Church.

But while the Latin tongue, supplanted by a mixed jargon, was sinking into obsolescence, the Church was

preserving in its sacred text a thin but pure thread, and maintaining a slender connection with the past glories of classicism. Therefore while every tendency towards learning was suppressed, the Church, by imposing Latin as the hierarchical tongue upon all its adherents, was practically forging weapons which, if they were not to defeat it, were to prove capable of crippling it materially in a later age.

It was ultimately through the rule of Benedict that classical learning became preserved to us by those who entered his order, although it is possible that this was done more by an accidental interpretation of the letter of his injunctions than by any spiritual construction which he meant to be applied to them.

Music found a more stable basis when Gregory turned his mind to it, and we may be within measure of the truth in ascribing his interference to his zeal for the prestige of the Church rather than to any anxiety for the salvation of the art. His hostility towards learning, his aggressiveness towards the influences which widen the intellect and solidify character, leave scarcely any doubt on this score, and we feel that his attitude was purely an *ex cathedra* one. Music happened to be the means for bringing the office into disrepute; it was easy to convey a ribald or scandalous sense far removed from the words with which it was officially con-

nected, and the opportunity now as at a later date was too enticing. We may rest assured that if the licentious spirit of the age could have crept into any other part of the ecclesiastical machinery, Gregory would have reformed that too. He does not seem, however, to have been quite so successful when dealing with men of his own cloth.

We can be certain that all music of this period was not purely of the Church. The fact that there was sufficient to be used daily throughout the year for the service presumes also the existence of an enormous number of popular songs. The transmission by ear and voice of the tunes of the people may have brought down to Gregory's time many a stave that had been sung by a lonely shepherd on Thessalian slopes, many a snatch of song thrown into the air by the wine-pressers as they trod the Chian grape, many a wild hymn chanted at the secular games—and these even now may be woven into themes that re-echo through our cathedrals.

If, then, it was Gregory's aim to co-ordinate the music of the ritual by excluding tunes that recalled too pertinently and at inopportune moments words associated with unseemly thoughts, we are willing to bear without regret the loss of much when we consider the immensity of what he preserved. For in spite of doubts which critical investigators may cast on the authenticity of this proceeding or that, in spite of

interpolations and corrupt readings which may have crept into various texts, we may accept it that as far as the development of the art is concerned, he laid down precepts which made progress inevitable at a later period.

Once again we cannot fail to be impressed with the singular way in which the Church, striving by means of tyranny or suppression to gain her own ends, was unconsciously preserving and fostering the spirit that eventually was to rise up against her.

In the case of musical theory we do not meet, in this period, with any manifestations beyond the church doors. The texts of secular songs that have been preserved show that popular music must have existed, but of any widespread cultivation of the art there is no evidence. For although the "quadrivium" of this and an earlier time specifies "music," there is nothing to show that outside the clerical ranks it was followed otherwise than in a desultory fashion.

In our present investigation we at length can say that Gregory established music on lines borrowed from the Greeks, that he drew up a formula by which a future generation could work and advance the art, and that this formula was so constructed as to outlive his own time and remain in the safe keeping of the Church till men had emancipated

themselves from those other formulæ of his which had sunk human intelligence to the lowest depths.

Judged by standards of evolution we find music at the beginning of the seventh century of the Christian era practically where it was five centuries before Christ. In other words, the faculty for music remained in this embryonic condition for 1200 years, surely the longest period of incubation through which, in our present knowledge, any part of the human organism has passed.

We have now reached a point at which we can inquire into the mechanical production of sound, and we find the organ already brought to a practical stage. It is unnecessary, however, to trace its development; it will be sufficient to say that there was in existence a means for producing a definite series of musical sounds, and that this instrument was no new thing even in the Gregorian era. It is of the utmost moment to us to note that in spite of the possibilities which this appliance suggests nowadays, and primitive though it was, no practical use of it in the direction of harmony seems to have been made until about the tenth century. It is incomprehensible that no human brain conceived the idea or appreciated the result of causing two pipes to sound simultaneously. It is equally incomprehensible that it did not occur to the man who depressed the keys,

to sing another melody to the tune which he was reproducing. The mind, by means of the ear, seems to have been incapable of grasping and analysing two sounds either of the same pitch or in some degree agreeable to or harmonious with one another. From what we know of their construction it is scarcely likely that the organs were able to produce sounds even approximately in tune or of a pleasing character, while any rapid sequence of notes was out of the question. One may, indeed, go further and ask whether the mechanism for producing the sound did not make just as fearful a noise as the pipes themselves.

It would be rash to assert that all the organs which we find represented in sculpture, illumination and painting did not actually exist, still to our modern minds the complete absence of anything to show that they played a part in the development of the faculty for music suggests an explanation which seems at least plausible.

In all these representations of organs we have certain invariable elements in the design—the central mass with vertical lines to indicate the pipes, and the plastic figures at the sides showing the blowers and performers. It is quite possible that these representations had become conventionalised and were depicted as symbols rather than as practical pieces of mechanism. This, at least, is by no means a rare

occurrence in later periods, when artists scarcely troubled themselves about points which to the musician were essential. In our own day there has been published a print of a colossal lady performing on a violin, accompanied by an orchestra of strings, of whom no two are playing in the same position. Were this print to be preserved for a thousand years and become one of the few relics of our present musical system, some archæologist might make deductions from it as erroneous as those of the late William Chappell, when he infers that in the Egypt of the fourth Dynasty harmony must have existed, because, in one representation, three pipers are playing on pipes "of such different lengths that it is mathematically impossible that they could be playing in unison."[1]

It would be idle to argue as to the manner of sound produced by an instrument which we know only from its pictorial representation, and we may dismiss all conclusions which cannot be practically verified. What is important to us is that after thousands of years, the musical sense was beginning to experience a desire for something more complete than a series of notes strung together to form a scale.

[1] *History of Music*, i. 2.

CHAPTER V

HARMONY IN EMBRYO

The early fabric of harmony was a very rudimentary affair, vastly different from the web of sound to which we are accustomed nowadays, but whether harmony stepped forth before counterpoint is altogether immaterial to our present inquiry. The claims to precedence of one or the other will doubtless prove in the future, as they have done in the past, to be of vital importance to the theorist, but we need not pause to split hairs over the matter. The art of music has never yet been sufficiently self-reliant to shake itself free from the shackles of casuistry. In the Greek period, the Hellenic mind, from force of habit, was driven to account for every degree of that to us most obvious of all musical things, namely, the scale. Since then the bookshelves of the world have been burdened with innumerable tomes, asserting, traversing, disproving, assailing, shaking to their foundations the premises

of long-winded disputants, till the mind is amazed that any art could survive such thraldom. Yet nature, having begun the thing, went on with the thoroughness that stamps all her workings.

To attempt a differentiation between harmony and counterpoint is to hang out a banner of defiance and invite the enemy to tear it to ribbons. We still are in what we may call the ecclesiastical period of music, and, to simplify matters, if indeed that be possible, we may borrow from the Church in the way in which the Church borrowed from Paganism, and say that harmony and counterpoint are the Moral Theology of the *canto fermo.*

Equivocation was not the least of the accomplishments of the ancient Fathers, and we are by no means surprised that Huckbald, the earliest known Christian writer on music, should have drawn up a treatise intelligible only in one-tenth of its meanderings, and for the most part veiled, as is the manner of theorists even of to-day, in impressive obscurities. For our purpose it is enough to note that he established the possibility of two simultaneous sounds in agreement with one another.

To a human intelligence accustomed to the heavy-footed monotony of laborious sequences of sounds, unrelieved by accompanying series of notes, the effect must have seemed astounding, while those who were concerned with the purity of music must

have regarded it as fraught with peril. Some local monk with brief authority may have wailed in protest, but unfortunately for him he had only his own isolated opinion to advance against the innumerable proliferation of brain-cells somewhat beyond any control of his, and ultimately the ear tolerated, then accepted and welcomed the innovation.

The day was still with the theorists, and about the tenth century men were already absorbed in the mechanics of the art. It is astonishing to think that all their ingenuity and perseverance were devoted to such a rudimentary thing as the scale. It was not so much a pamphlet on the mountain in travail as an encyclopædia on the ridiculous mouse. When we consider that music was limited practically to what the voice could produce, yielding only the most primitive results, it is extraordinary that so much mental energy should have been given to it. There must have been a vague instinct, unconsciously asserting itself, that all these inditings of a small matter were going to attain a great end.

More important than the theories themselves was the determining of a means to record music, and from the crabbed twists and blots which clung desperately to a single line drawn above the text, there grew step by step a conventional system by which musical sounds became accessible to all who took the trouble to learn the notation. The evolution of the art

of writing music advanced more rapidly than the art itself, and as early as the thirteenth century we find examples of the magnificence with which the four-line stave and the large square notes decorated the pages of the choir-books. Music has been happy even in its accessories. There is nothing connected with it that we would wish to hide away, except the modern upright pianoforte whose shape is unfortunately only a mechanical concession. But even in the remote days which we are considering, man's intelligence realised that the beautiful thing in the mind had to be set forth on the page in the most lordly fashion, and no matter what it meant in sound, at least the eye could rejoice in the wonderful designs and patterns which it traced.

The insistence of the theorists upon the relation of note to note so engaged their minds that the practical application of one note to another to make them sound together had indifferent results. The first proceeding was for the voices to sing in unison or in octaves, but by experiment another note was found for the purpose of accompanying the individual tones of the melody, and as the tune moved, so also did the series of notes parallel with it. We can picture the dismay of those who regarded this as a retrograde step.

But these two notes were no great help towards attaining a rich effect ; therefore another note had to

be chosen to go with the melody. For a moment let us be technical. After the key-note the next in importance is the fifth—that is, it is the fifth note upwards in the scale from and including the key-note. As counted downwards in the scale, this same note is the fourth from and including the key-note. Thus it lies between the two notes which constitute the octave, and it is called "the fifth above" the lower note of the octave, or "the fourth below" the higher one. This note was the one fixed upon to accompany the individual notes of the melody, and as the tune moved up or down, this intermediate note moved likewise, always keeping at the same distance from what may be called its parent note, and the result was a series of three notes—the lower note, its octave above, and the note in between—which when sounded together formed a chord, and a sequence of two or more chords formed a progression.

Ludicrously simple as this appears, it is not much older than Westminster Abbey.

Having arrived at this, the theorists discovered that these groups of three notes (two of which were identical in sound) could be improved by the addition of another note which, in combination with the others, gave character to the chord. This new note lay between the key-note and the fifth above it, and was called the "third" or "mediant." Thus we have, first of all, the key-note, the fifth above it, and the

mediant in between, and when these are sounded together we have a sense of completeness.

Now music is ruled by physical laws, and one of these is that when a string is stretched and set in vibration it gives forth a sound. This sound is compound; it is made up of many sounds, the strongest being the fundamental generator, the weaker being its harmonics. According to an invariable rule of nature these harmonics proceed on a definite and unalterable plan. The lowest sound of all is the fundamental note, the next is its fifth, then the octave again, and then the "mediant." With the other harmonics we are not concerned, but these just mentioned are the identical notes to which the older harmonists became sensitive only after endless wanderings up and down the scale in search of that "something" which was to give completeness to their string of notes. We now reach a very striking point in the evolution of the musical faculty—nay, in the evolution of the primary function of hearing. Man has only realised in the last few hundred years the existence of a dynamic fact which he must have had endless opportunities for testing, when the wind whistled through the warp of his loom, when the arrow left the tightly strained bow-string.

In our survey of this special development of a human sense we must ever look back, just as we are compelled to make comparisons with the facts supplied by our present knowledge of the art of music. We

have arrived at a point at which the brain takes account of three sounds which existed at the earliest stage of human history. We need only two fixed points, a string stretched between them and a breath of wind : the sound that is produced is the foundation of all music. We cannot reduce any of the other arts to such simple terms. They depend upon human means, but music springs from a fact which is singularly independent of man's design or control. The harmonic chord is no mere accident of human ingenuity ; it relies upon no human adaptation of nature's laws to give it being. It exists as a dynamic axiom as much as the solar system does, and we may well wonder if from some other small fact in nature a vast projection of man's brain may not yet appear. We may well wonder if in some later æon the veritable "music of the spheres," that ethereal unreality, may yet evoke a human faculty to which it appears comprehensible and substantial enough to take its place within the range of man's intelligence.

Even for so simple a proceeding as the sounding of three notes together the human ear was not prepared, and time had to pass before it became stereotyped and formulated. The sequence of notes possessed some vitality, for in spite of its crudity and monotony to our ears it passed into the language of music and was accepted for progress.

By accident, by some variation regarded as too

trivial for record, it was discovered that when one of several voices chose to leave the beaten track and proceed on its own way a sound was sometimes produced which was more agreeable than the rigid progressions of bare octaves and fifths. Theory was not to enslave some ears at least, and a kind of improvisation was permitted to one of the singers. In order to elaborate the texture of their music the revolutionary spirits of the time hit upon a more advanced method of attaining effects of mixed voices, and just as modern composers pile one theme on another, these earlier composers, with less insight but with an equal desire for variety and richness, thought it might be a good plan if each voice were to sing simultaneously a separate and distinct tune.

This, again, like every innovation in music, met with opposition, but it led the way to much that is of supreme importance. For it suggested that not one voice alone (that which maintained the melody), but every voice was of equal value in a composition. Each voice, in fact, was individualised. At first this emancipation of part-singing was fortuitous and under no specific law. Something better than a rule of thumb progression of chords was aimed at, and the time came for the rejection of the crudities of the old harmonies which crawled aimlessly after one another. It was necessary to restrain the voice parts which went on their own sweet way at the will of the

singer, for amid the disorder produced by several voices singing different melodies simultaneously, the ear was beginning to distinguish between sounds that were sweet and those that were ugly. But further than this a more important stage of development was being reached, for the human faculty was beginning to appreciate something more than groups of notes sounded together : it was evincing the possession of a higher organisation in being able to recognise the existence of, and to discriminate between, two or more complete melodies when sung together. The brain was becoming educated to analyse compound sounds, and to follow those sounds which, in the midst of others, formed a definite sequence.

So far as our inquiry is concerned, we meet for the first time with the specialisation of the sense of hearing in regard to music. The correlation of ear and brain had existed as far back as the records of human endeavour can be traced, and this faculty to determine the source, nature, distance, and direction of a sound,—to analyse its meaning in reference to the human being, to note whether it signified good will or a warning of impending danger,—must have had its origin far away in the unknowable spaces of time when man himself was in a state of transition. Memory, too, had an important place in the function, in the recognition of a sound which in some past experience had betokened pleasure or peril.

These conditions are accepted as an indispensable part of the cerebral apparatus, but we have to wait till the thirteenth century of the Christian era before a new phase manifests itself. We have, indeed, arrived at a stage when we can look back and measure potentialities, and at last find ourselves face to face with facts.

The following of one theme through a complexity of other themes must have been regarded in the thirteenth century as an incredible feat. The human brain had reached an epoch in its development more striking and significant than any other mental occurrence in the known and recorded history of mankind. Through the long centuries which led up to this new expression of cerebral activity, we note the complete absence of harmony. The brain was absolutely incapable of responding to a tune that was sung. Even the street-brawler of to-day displays constantly and disconcertingly the possession of a faculty far beyond that of the most advanced "musician" of six hundred years ago, for his musical instinct, coarse as it is, resolves itself invariably, almost mechanically, into an attempt to add some "real part" to the tune which his fellows shout. Tradition and memory are of some account in his case, for the popular melody rests upon an elementary scheme of harmony, and its cadences seldom vary. Still the

instinctive reproduction by an unskilled singer of certain conventional musical phrases which took centuries of theorising to formulate shows what a change has taken place in the average mind.

So far we have been occupied with those sounds which reach the ear from without, directly stimulating the auditory apparatus, which, in turn, transmits the impression to the brain. Now, however, we arrive at a period in which the brain conceives the sound without any stimulation of the auditory apparatus, a period in which for the first time we have evidence of the brain acting, so to speak, as an accumulator of past auditory impressions, storing them, recording them, discriminating between sounds antagonistic to one another and those which produce an agreeable effect.

It may be urged that the testimony in favour of this assertion is somewhat fragile, and relies solely upon the extant musical records of the period. But when these are compared with the bare framework of a modern composition, it has to be admitted that some element other than the advance of instrumental technique both on its mechanical and on its interpretative side, has to be considered. There is no way of arriving at a conclusion except by a study of internal evidence.

Too much stress need not be laid upon the absence

of instrumental means at this period, for composition was limited to what could be given forth by the voice, and all the innovations and experiments were carried out solely in music which had to be sung. The fact, too, that the man who made the music was the man who sang it,—the fact that the early attempts at embroidery were in the nature of improvisations, strengthens and justifies the assertion that a new phase of creative activity had arisen.

Nearly everyone to-day possesses the faculty of hearing in silence some tune familiar to him, and there are very few who cannot by an effort of concentration hear also some harmonies appropriate to it. This is the result of memory, both melody and harmony having been listened to so often that they become fixed in the brain exactly like a line of poetry or a verbal phrase. These harmonies are to a large extent inevitable, and, though perhaps trite and commonplace in those who have no special musical gifts, are fairly correctly heard. The higher the musical faculty is developed the more complex is the musical thought. At a later stage this will be discussed at length: [1] the point to be established is that this faculty at the present time is common to a large number of people who are not professed musicians.

If this faculty had been possessed to any extent by

[1] See pp. 195, 204, 207, 260, 261.

the composers of the thirteenth century some evidence of it would have crept into their music. If they heard at all with the "ear of the mind," they were singularly reluctant to advance their mental impressions of sound against the theory which prevailed. It is inconceivable that they would wittingly and deliberately have adhered to an arbitrary convention which limited the scope of their art, while at the same time they were conscious of other and more attractive sound relations. Of creative work in our sense of the word there was scarcely a trace : analytical power was slowly developing, but from the synthetical method to which the old composers resorted (and we must conclude that they did not practise it in defiance of mental conceptions which combated theory at every turn) certain important results were obtained.

We have seen that while one voice sang the melody, the other voices were allowed some licence in regard to their individual parts, provided that they kept within defined rules. It is to be borne in mind that the chief aim at this time was to combine melodies rather than to open up the art of harmony. Melody was still dominated by the church modes, and the practice was to adhere strictly to the notes of the scale in each part. A phrase began and remained in one mode till its close. The composer could not move out of it because no plan for doing this suggested

itself to him : even had he been conscious of some way from one mode to another he would have introduced an element foreign to the modal formulæ. Variety, therefore, became necessary in order to break the monotony of a series of chords very similar to one another, and this was secured by making each voice maintain a course of its own. This attempt to combine two separate melodies was not successful, so another device was tried.

It was in these days something of a stroke of genius to conceive the idea of making the separate parts in some respects alike in structure, so that while the main theme remained easily recognisable, the others resembled it, and the musical plan of imitating in the other parts the principal features of the predominant part came into vogue.

This demanded some readjustment of the contents of the theme, so that when it had gone on its way for some little space its subsequent section could agree in sound with its first. The melody, in fact, was so contrived that certain sections existed as a continuous portion of the whole, and at the same time as harmony to the other sections.

As may be surmised, many a wild effect was obtained, the main object being to keep the "imitation" moving. So long as the chief melody was given sufficient prominence it did not matter much what the other voices were doing. The prominence,

however, of one voice gave vitality to the composition, and the balancing of the other parts, so as to agree with and support the leading part, resulted in greater care being exercised in the choice of the principal theme. Therefore while character and individuality were sought after in order to give distinction to each part, they at the same time were brought into close relation with one another, and the structure of composition became moulded and consistent. It is clear that to achieve this advance, sensitiveness to auditory impressions and discrimination of sounds, as well as a feeling for proportion, must have reached a comparatively high stage of development, and the faculty of music was being trained to seek outside the bounds of the ecclesiastical modes some more free medium for uttering its conceptions.

CHAPTER VI

THE CROWNING OF PLAIN-SONG

In order to accentuate the embryonic state of the musical faculty some space has been given to a description of the elements upon which harmony is based, and it has been pointed out that the human ear took centuries to acquire a feeling in relation to melody which, in modern times, is instinctive.

Periods in music overlap to such an extent that it is not easy to assign a precise date to each individual step, nor is it requisite to do so here. The task of the archæologist has already been performed with such fidelity that little remains to be done. Nor is this the place for a scientific explanation of the precise mathematical relation of note to note and chord to chord. We are more concerned with the art of music as an expression of intellect and emotion, and we find that there was still a stolid acceptance of a singularly invertebrate form of art, with little interest in its possibilities. It cannot be said that in the

other arts the same dull progress was made, for they have always been happy in their freedom, not from all theory, but from the kind of theory which has oppressed music. We should still be in the dark ages in more senses than one if architecture, for instance, had been used as a sort of flogging-post by long-winded pedagogues. Music, however, had no utilitarian end to meet: it appealed entirely to the intellect, while architecture primarily meant a roof and shelter, and the theorist who kept the house-dweller waiting while he held forth over some technical matter would himself have fallen two ways beneath an axe without further ado. It is a pity that there was no summary way then, or for that matter now, of deciding this kind of disputation on the spot.

But those were argumentative days, and men in waking after the dark ages gladly clutched at anything which would give them an intellectual cachet among their fellows. Music must have been a gold mine to those who found their opportunity in the perplexities which the ancient rules afforded. To delight in hedging about an apparently simple process with restrictions does not belong exclusively to mediæval minds or times. The joy of a Cherubini in laying down the prohibitions in counterpoint can only be equalled by the unbounded happiness of a Berlioz in infringing them.

What must ever remain a marvel is that in the revival which followed the dark ages, music should have made such slight progress. In every respect it was completely detached from any other branch of human activity, it was entirely self-contained and did not depend upon externals for its very existence. The immense concentration of intellect, or the sum of many intellects, demanded for the building of the Gothic cathedrals, may have drained human resources, so that little brain power was left for mental effort in other directions. It is possible that architecture by reason of popular interest in the great works which it was creating, attracted to its ranks a large number of men eager to gain recognition for their talents. The fact that there was something mysterious attached to Masonry, that the Guilds conferred privileges on their members, may also have had weight, for in the work that was spread over two or three centuries there must have been many thousands engaged. The public acknowledgment of the importance of a man's calling is bound to influence a certain number far beyond any question of the worldly benefits that may accrue, and this is true of all ages, particularly of our own. Nevertheless there were men working, as it were, in the raw material without any prospect either of acclamation or reward.

While the state of society was favourable for the erecting of great cathedrals to supply the needs of

religion, music was developed just as far as was necessary for ritual, and although folk-music must have existed, it was transmitted mainly by oral tradition, for the means to write it down still remained obscure and complicated. Unless, therefore, we assume that the reproductive powers of man's mind were held in restraint in the direction of music, owing to the great demands of other forms of activity, there is no explanation to account for the absence of that foresight which showed itself so clearly in architecture.

The ecclesiastical recognition of music preserved what little there was in its development. It did more than this: for when the device of adding one tune to another came into vogue, and drafts were made upon popular melodies associated with words somewhat at variance with religious ideas, the Church prescribed exactly the limits to which this embellishment of the plain-song, or themes founded upon the ecclesiastical modes, was to be carried. When the Papacy removed its seat from Rome to Avignon in the fourteenth century, Pope John XXII, in a truly pontifical document, confined church music to the rigid ecclesiastical modes. That such a prohibition was called for shows that music must have had an innate power even in those times, and that the author of the *Extravagantes Iohannis* should have been constrained, in the midst of manifold preoccupations, to issue so

portentous an interdict, is evidence that the Church foresaw music as a weapon which an adversary might use with deadly effect. The document also furnishes us with proof that there were schools in which music was taught according to the ecclesiastical method. Of the popular music, which came to be denounced with all the gravity and minuteness of a papal decree, we have scarcely a vestige. Yet its influence must have been far-reaching to extort such a protest. Some of it, as I have suggested, may be preserved to us in our present-day plain-song.

But before we approach the fourteenth century some bearings have to be taken. I have spoken of the transitions which the Latin speech had undergone. The barbarian with his uncouth phrase must have vented many a curse when he found the soft vowel out of reach of his tongue, tied as it was to rougher consonants. But the traffic of the market-place, the haggling for things of daily need, ran, as it were, a bastard file over the smooth metal of the native speech, and compelled the adoption of strange perversions. The affront must have caused many a patrician shudder. It was not race alone, but all that appertains to race, that was trampled beneath the heel of the invader. There was no emperor to drag to the gibbet, no profligate to be hoisted, for his wonderment, into an imperial throne

instead of to the gallows which he deserved: it was merely the chafferer behind his stall who, for favours of trade, fell into the ways of the foreigner in order to win a denarius or two.

The gradual obsolescence of the classic tongue gave rise to languages fitted to the needs of new ideas and new peoples, and what was corrupt in one restricted area became the pure mother-source in its neighbour. Out of a mass of heterogeneous elements one people after another was choosing the stepping-stones which make the foundation of a nation. When man could not find the thing for his purpose in the market-place, he was sure to light upon it on the battle-field.

From far-off tribal observances came the deep-rooted idea of communities, and the ploughshare of war was necessary to cut the avenues through the jungles in order that access might be given to those who could form worthy alliances in the unending antagonism of man. Old barriers were being broken down, old landmarks were being obliterated, and new lines of communication were demarcating new frontiers. Human intercourse when cemented by blood grew more flexible, and the awakening of a people to find itself a nation established a definite poise of thought. In the few breathing-spaces afforded between the passages of armies across the ever-debatable marches of Europe, men seemed to have

flung their arms aside, and, in the intensity of their longing for respite from encounter of battle, welcomed any distraction. But if bickerings on an insignificant scale ceased, from the end of the eleventh century till nearly two hundred years later, there was an immense movement towards the East, which accomplished definite results. Not one nation merely, but all the peoples of western Europe, were up in arms.

It was a far-seeing policy that inspired the Church to enlist the heads of States under the banner of the Cross, for, vital as the conquest of the Infidel seemed to be, it was just as essential that the Papacy should assume, for its own purposes, the rights of supremacy over sovereign as well as people.

Those who rallied to each Crusade were men of widely varying race and habit of thought. Mercenaries they were in a spiritual sense, since for fee or reward they accepted temporal remissions and dispensations which the Church could well afford to scatter since they cost her nothing, while it was no small advantage to be released from the irksome obligations which she imposed with an iron hand. Fervour and superstition, besides, discovered a new way to pay old debts, and it was looked upon as an easy escape from a difficulty to join one of the warlike expeditions which were despatched to the East.

But religious enthusiasm alone scarcely accounts

for the enormous number of men who undertook a formidable journey, who faced the ravages of disease, in order to win some visionary "merit." Many a soldier of fortune, many a spadassin with a purse as empty as his scabbard, seized the chance for getting rid of his earthly and legal burdens by accepting service against the Infidel, who had, in his eyes, the one inestimable quality of swordsmanship. Many a noble, not entirely blind to the prospect of establishing himself at the head of some vague province in the East, and studious of the ecclesiastical authority which was well worth placating, made his vows and summoned his retinue. Curiosity and ambition, the hope of adventure, the spectacular side of the campaign, cast their spell, and the irresistible fascination of a journey into unknown lands, the mystery of the shrine that the fanatic was to behold, if the relic that he wore and the physical privations that he accepted were to count, swept into the ranks many an eager recruit. Many, too, sailed from the western shores of the Mediterranean well equipped with the thought and culture of the age, and, with minds exalted by the peculiar nature of the enterprise, were in a fit mood to assimilate every novel impression.

Whatever the Crusades may have accomplished for the spiritual needs of man, it is undoubted that they brought with them benefits of a worldly kind. For

they threw into close contact men who realised that what was right and good in their own communities might not suit all, and so there arose an understanding in regard to conventional usages and a code of courtesy to which some modern observances may be traced. The great trade routes to the East were opened up and a vast commerce began to flow along them. To discuss the cause of the Crusades or their influence upon progress is to write a treatise in which the most important questions must be left in doubt. The religious tide that set to the East may be ascribed to many causes, but for our purpose it is sufficient to note it as a manifestation of a mighty outburst of human energy. The feudal system, the comity of nations, the development of the art of war and the best means for making a blow effective, may all have had a part. Into these we need not enter, but it is material for our purpose to observe that, whatever its relation to the Crusades, the age of chivalry had arisen, and not the least important feature of that age was its literature.

The transitions which the Latin tongue underwent resulted, in the Western part of Europe, in the formation of a language with which grew a new phase of civilisation, closely identified with the conception of chivalry and the infinitely wide application of its rules, its ceremonies, its idealisation

of womanhood. The spirit of the age was one of romance, and the Romance language and its off-shoots became the chosen medium for the display of a fascinating and unique phase of human intelligence. The name itself signifies to us something frail and unreal, unstable and unsubstantial as a dream. One might say that it was well fitted to represent the springtide of man's thought, blossoming forth on the awakening after a long and dark winter. Like spring, too, all that it meant in culture and imagination was quickly over, leaving only the perfume of a gay entertainment, somewhat formal in its sentiment, reflecting life mainly in its decorative aspect. But from its delicate, its fragile petals, the fruit remained in much that is great in European literature.

The progress of evolution that was to culminate in the French language was slow, for nature was preoccupied in unfolding off-shoots. The *langue courtoise* of the Troubadours was one of these, a curious instance of atavism. For as in ancient Egypt and the classical days of Rome there was a caste even in language, so also there was one in the case of the Provençal tongues. From Persia and Arabia had already come, by way of Spain, artificial forms of verse which were adopted into Provençal, and many a soldier of fortune, killing the long hours before the walls of Ascalon, absorbed new devices of rhythm and cadence.

The use of a language by no means extensive in its vocabulary, by men professing a definite vocation, scarcely conferred plasticity upon it, and the sameness of theme, the ceremonious word-play with formal poetic shapes and rhymes, imposed restrictions of ideas as well. The singers may have deliberately chosen to adhere almost invariably to one subject for fear of losing their way in more adventurous spheres of imagination.

Fashion, too, the habit of the mind as well as the outward dress,—prescribed conventionalities, which, even in the highly elaborate game of love-making, may have cut the canzo to a pattern, much as the Japanese poem is trimmed to spend its brief life during the single flutter of a fan. The trick of rhyme-spinning, with a lady's favour as the prize, became infectious, and the amount of poetry, lyric and epic, that was produced is incalculable. In this direction mental activity was being exercised so widely that music could not have been absent, for we have the rules according to which the Jougleur was to be educated, and the instruments in which he was to perfect himself. But, as we have seen, there was no harmony in our sense of the word, and the notes employed as accompaniments could not have had any extensive range.

If the music of the Church is any guide, the "gay science" must have been dismal indeed,

according to our notions of melody, and when Pope John at Avignon issued his counter-blast, there must have been some frank borrowings, which, as the Troubadours grew more bold in their efforts, became associated with anything but canonical sentiments.

Important as the music of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries may be from an archæological point of view, it does not represent either a sudden or a rapid development of the musical sense. Every advance in the arts was in an objective direction ; even poetry, although by no means poor in didactic themes, celebrated history, which, in the minds of those for whom it was destined, might well have been real, while there was always some prince or lady whose favour was to be won by a tactful reference to ancestral deeds or to personal excellences. Troubadour music, also, in spite of its having been purely melodic, showed no great attempt to interpret the sense of the words, and it is quite possible, judging by the spirit of the time in regard to the art, that it was not carried very far, because it did not altogether meet with the sanction of those whose business was with rule. In our own day this would have been anything but an obstacle, but we must remember that we are dealing with a faculty still in a primitive state.

While in earlier days the theorist may have retarded the progress of the art for some space, we may be certain that none had a hand in extending its scope. Everything that was added to it in the way of harmony sprang directly from the brain, either as the result of some process of the "ear of the mind," or by some happy accident, and, after the discoverer of the sound had found his work good, it was the turn of the theorist to step in with his explanation. In the middle ages every advance in the art was the cause, not the result, of theory. Time has not impaired the strength of this assertion in spite of many an attempt to dominate the art by hard and fast rules based upon the experience of others. To curb or repress the cerebral operations of an individual because his brain conceives sound in a form alien to the mental effort of some predecessor of his, is to exercise a vicious influence. In every art the question of what is right or what is wrong must arise from time to time, but it is the broad principles of æsthetics and not theory which have to decide the issue. These principles no upstart grammarian can enunciate on the instant: they have grown imperceptibly in the intellect and are the outcome, not of a moment's thought, but of the brain-effort of generations.

In defiance of the theorists music was slowly extending its boundaries, and what we now regard as

conventions were causing many a misgiving. Limited as was the range of permissible harmony, whatsoever lay outside it, in some kind of *terra incognita*, may have tempted adventurous spirits to the engaging pursuit of the forbidden. But with the brain teeming with sounds, even though these sounds were to our ideas elementary and stereotyped, it was an easy matter to wander afield. One of the most curious points in the evolution of the musical faculty is the slowness with which modulation made its way. The ecclesiastical modes had been cast in a style rigid enough in all conscience to satisfy the most orthodox, but it is not recorded why the austerity which was imposed upon music was not extended with equal impartiality to other matters of life. From the convention of these modes there was no escape : the scale was incomplete in having no accidentals, the part-writing in a modern sense was limited, and the rules dominating music were far out of proportion to the scantiness of the material at the composer's command.

It is asserted—and there is much to support the view—that it was not till the time of Bach that our modern notions of tonality became established. But whether or not what we know to-day as a key was only faintly understood, there was at least sufficient persistence of a series of sounds so identified with one another as to constitute a mode, and among these

notes some were more prominent than others. They appeared most frequently in compositions, they in a sense governed the character of the work. All music of the middle ages emphasised their presence, and the result is to us unrelieved monotony. The scales consisted of certain groups of notes, not all at equal distances from one another. The series of semitones, our smallest subdivision at present, was not uniform: it merely interrupted at fixed points the series of tones. There was no reason why these semitones should appear only at definite places in the scale, and the ear which had grown accustomed to their intervention somewhere, conceived the idea of interpolating them everywhere in the scale. Their use broke up the persistence of one or two notes which were dwelt upon at emphatic points, and in the effort to get rid of monotony fresh elements were introduced. The rule was to confine all embroidery to the notes of the scale, to avoid all notes that were foreign to it, so that each part presented the same character.

But it was found by practice that a more plastic result could be obtained by slightly modifying one or two notes in the secondary parts of a composition for voices, so that, by what seems to us an almost infinitesimal variation, a sense of relief, of freshness, was infused into the work. This must have been originally accidental, for it happened that the new notes came naturally to the singer at certain points,

and it may have been difficult to avoid them either because they were unusual or because of their agreeable quality.

It is not my intention here to trace each new chord to the precise work in which it appears for the first time. It is more important to consider man's musical activity in relation to those other tides of thought which were laden with portentous destinies.

The discovery of printing, which had been called into the service of music about the middle of the fifteenth century, now recorded with precision the ideas of composers and gave their works a wide circulation. The knowledge that, by means of the printing press, a larger appeal could be made, no doubt stimulated the art, but the new movement which the invention gave to literature, both past and contemporary, had the effect of widening men's minds and creating an atmosphere in which the intellect could flourish with vigour. The two, music and literature, began to form the union which, if the terms have not always been quite equal, has undoubtedly given birth to many a sturdy son.

But beyond this, shortly after the beginning of the sixteenth century, there occurred two events, which, though apparently unconnected, were nevertheless to have deep influence upon the art. For while Luther in his Reformation aimed at the cleansing of an

immoral and corrupt Church, the Reformation which Palestrina stemmed was aimed at the complete abolition, in the sanctuary, of an art whose licence was showing a forwardness and a curiosity to invade the places that were called holy. In compliance with ruder demands the popular music of the time had again crept into the sacred office, and as so ill-chosen an accompaniment to the ritual was out of place, the authorities very naturally interfered.

The consideration of the question by the Council of Trent is only one of the many instances in which the Church took music in hand. The threat of excommunication which Luther received with a derisive shrug stirred Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina to prompt action in defence of his art, and it was owing to the excellence of his work that the appropriateness of his music in the celebration of the mass was confirmed.

This point in music has always been regarded as a critical one, and although a close investigation has shorn it of much of its romance, and finally disposed of a fiction which appealed to the popular imagination, still it is undoubted that the Council of Trent had it in its power to damage the prestige of the art by withdrawing it from ecclesiastical use. But even if it had abolished music entirely in the Church, are we so sure that the progress of the art would have been stayed? A great deal of very natural but

entirely irresponsible sentiment is attached to this event, even in its now accepted and veracious aspect. Palestrina was no doubt the figure-head of his art in the sixteenth century, but, had the resolution of the Council of Trent been unfavourable, even that verdict would have been no great affront in the light of what other composers of a much later date have had to suffer. No council could eliminate from the human brain the faculty of music which was now displaying so much vigour, and the Church was not the only spot where the art was flourishing. By excluding music for ever from her services the Church no doubt foresaw a risk to herself, and from a political point of view she did well to retain some control over it. But who can say what might have happened had Palestrina not been firmly established in Papal favour? One may be tolerably certain that it would not have been the art of music that would have waned.

The period, indeed, was one of great mental activity, and the jealous eye of the Church could not but view with apprehension the spread of an intellectual power which might one day dispute her authority, and, as she herself had narrowly escaped an upheaval which had for its aim nothing less heroic than a reversion to a much older system of religion, reforms of all kinds were in the air. Luther with his Papal Bull torn to shreds invites the temporal powers

to shut the gates of heaven against him by means of an earthly edict; Palestrina stands at the bar to answer a case which is strong for the total suppression of a human faculty; Copernicus almost in the same hour has to resort to casuistry while the stars speed on in their courses despite the windy threats of St. Peter's; while the father of Galileo spins guileless counterpoints as his little boy spins his top, clapping his hands and shouting "*Eppur si muove!*"

This picture of mediævalism is lacking in nothing to quicken and gladden the eye of the cynic. Art, science, religion are flung into the *pot au feu*, in order to concoct some nourishment for man that he may serve his Maker according to edict, while it is from the inconsequential scum, the πάρεργα, that the mental energies are strained which are to be used for the progress and benefit of humanity.

CHAPTER VII

DRAMA AND REFORM

THE efforts of the Council of Trent to secure for the service of the Church music which should have no associations other than those belonging to the office had an unexpected result, for the great composers after Palestrina seem for the most part to have left ecclesiastical music severely alone. This may have been a coincidence: it may also have been due to the spread of the principles of the Reformation, for when men awoke to the fact that outside the sanctuary lay a world which hitherto they had only seen obscured, as it were, by clouds of incense, they gazed with relief upon a view of things in which the secular element was predominant. There must, however, have been many a good son of the Church, tempered as to his enthusiasm by the flagrant abuses of the clerical privilege, who was by no means surprised to see some leakage, although still unshaken in his loyalty. The misgivings of one

encouraged another to revolt, while he who stood at the cross-roads directed his attention, with some amazement at his own hardihood, to those matters which lay outside ecclesiastical control.

Whatever opinions may be held as to the righteousness of Luther's cause, or the moral fitness of the Church that for fifteen hundred years had professed to maintain the *Tu es Petrus* of its Founder, the point, as far as music was concerned, was one of cardinal importance. For although there had been timid efforts to unite with music the secular sentiments in poetry, it was not till Monteverde appeared that any widespread movement of influence or significance took place. Music had been turned so much into a machine that in secular compositions, even although the emotion of the text was given its appropriate expression, some contrapuntal exorcist was sure to arise to forbid the unclean thing. Even Palestrina, daring to think for himself, was still in the fetters of musical law, and his musical sense was not keen enough, viewed in the light of modern developments, to disregard conventional practice so as to set a text with complete sympathy. This assertion will doubtless be challenged, but we have to analyse the effect which concerted vocal music produces upon us. In modern times the ear has grown so educated that an unaccompanied work sung in four parts, although

contrapuntal devices may be sparingly used, does produce a definite emotional feeling. The most arbitrary—one might say the most commonplace—proceeding will produce an impression, not by reason of any special quality in the music, but because the mind, recalling past experiences, is stimulated as much by memory as by the reception of a mass of sounds interwoven and sung by several voices. The conditions, too, under which the work is heard often act upon the mind in such a way that it will accept in moments of excitement music which it would unhesitatingly reject on more calm deliberation.

When we consider the means at his disposal—the human voice singing in parts—we are amazed that Palestrina produced so large a number of compositions. But from a musical point of view it is not an obvious matter to discriminate between that which was sacred in his works and that which was secular. The only difference in his or in any contemporary works lay in the words. No effort was made to interpret the text: the music of many a "Fa-la" would go equally well to "Amen," and Berlioz was less a parodist than a realist when he chose the latter word as the "burden" for his celebrated fugue. At the same time, in the evolution of the musical sense, a point was reached at which the art was carried to the utmost limits prescribed by the theorists.

Fortunately, however, for music, a composer appeared whose destiny it was to upset those preconceived notions which by this time had acquired quite a respectable air of hoariness. Of the long line of musical reformers who did not enjoy (if the word is not grotesquely inappropriate) the benefits of a "sound musical education," Monteverde is accepted as the ancestor. Strictly speaking, others foreshadowed some of the innovations which are now associated with his name, but without disparaging their work or claims, we may discuss him as the preeminent member of an important group. He was also the first to discover that, in the process of sterilisation to which music had to be subjected before it could be passed as immune by the theorists, one active principle, namely, emotion, had been eliminated. There is a singular pathos in the efforts of modern writers of a certain school of musical thought to take Monteverde to task for his shortcomings, but it is a little late in the day to find fault.[1]

One can well understand the dismay of the musical casuists when they beheld this profligate not only

[1] This critical temper is extended to modern works as well, and it is nothing of a shock to read this sort of thing—"The whole work is singularly lacking in contrapuntal interest, and depends solely for such effect as it achieves upon certain emotional impressions of harmony and colour." This was not written in the seventeenth century, but was printed in a London newspaper on March 22nd, 1907.

deriding their ancient maxims, but even capturing so wide a share of applause that all Europe was to ring with his name. Many an old fumbling pedagogue must have shivered when he heard some of Monteverde's progressions, and thanked his Maker that he would not live to see the ruin of his cherished art. One cannot withhold one's sympathies from such a good man, but when we find modern writers wagging their fingers at this scapegrace who squandered his gifts, who set so bad an example to another reformer without a "sound musical education," who demonstrated that even Palestrina in all his glory did not say the last word on music—when we find modern writers waxing indignant over the scant reverence which Monteverde had for their own counterparts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we are possessed by an irreverent mirth. In the spate of scholastic admonitions the material facts are lost sight of. For in Monteverde we have at last a sign that music was emerging from its long period of incubation, and as far as his musical sense is concerned he was more eminently endowed than any who had gone before him. If we take into consideration the magnitude of Palestrina's work we cannot say that his musical faculty was as delicate and responsive as that of Monteverde. The older composer undoubtedly maintained continuity with the past, and carried contrapuntal methods as far as he dared.

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But in a sense he had experienced a crisis which, although coming at the revolutionary period of life (to use a convenient term), did not lead to any violent changes. Monteverde, on the other hand, was not halfway on his journey towards that turbulent stage when he had succeeded in finding a publisher —an easier quest, apparently, in those days than it is now—for works which infringed all that was canonical in music.

When a lad of sixteen, in an age clamouring for sensations, records in print his impressions of life and of art, we instinctively denounce a press that is cheap in a variety of ways. There are, besides, certain classes of men whose affliction it is to possess the laugh of the injudicious, and their needs apparently must be satisfied. To them it is a matter of indifference whether the acrobat be in the House of Commons, in the Law Courts, or in the pulpit : the only essential is that he must be an acrobat. From them, too, comes the encouragement of the antics which are assumed by a clammy breed of youth, long-haired and bottle-shouldered for the most part—lads clamorous for notoriety, eager for the opportunity to dangle themselves, not unfortunately from a lamp-post, before a gaping public.

Monteverde was not of this stamp. Passing his days in the midst of men whose musical sense was circumscribed—among men, however, who had

brought their faculty to the highest pitch—he made excursions into undreamt-of regions, and justified his belief in his experiments by admitting them to imperishable print from which there was no retreating. He applied himself to an entirely new interpretation of the art, and refused to accept the routine fashion in which words were set. He attempted to illuminate his texts by sounds which were not altogether stereotyped, and if his enterprise led him into strange places from which he extricated himself with difficulty, he at least discovered unexplored realms.

The revival of letters in the Renaissance had cast men's thoughts back to the dramatic glories of ancient Athens, and as in the plastic and pictorial arts there was present an elaboration from the simple form to the highly complicated texture, the decorative idea no doubt suggested itself in other directions as well. But for any rhetorical or declamatory expression in music the contrapuntal style was out of place. There was no scope for the development of a theme which had to be imitated at length when set to words in which the emotion, the dramatic situation, changed at every moment. There was, in fact, no substantial reason for delaying the swift passage of thought in the text while some incongruous contrapuntal business had to be got through in order to satisfy those who styled themselves purists. It was being realised

that there was room for something else than the didactic side of music. The poet—of this period, by the way—who addressed the lover as "pale and wan," would have earned the gratitude of Peri and Caccini for his apostrophe, "The Devil take Her," for an ardent lyric was usually set to music which resembled a prudish, impervious lady, decorously arrayed in a sombre counterpoint.[1]

If we leave our Suckling it is but to light upon a paradox singularly pleasing in its import. Let us remember that it is just those of Monteverde's time who have given the scholiasts so much anxiety. The humour of it is that while he cannot be denied a place in the hegemony of the art, he takes his place not without a grudge because of the shocking example which he set our own Richard Wagner. Yet Monteverde's relation to the music of his time was exactly parallel with the relations of the Præ-Raphaelites and their clique to art in general. Monteverde's aim was to interpret the dramatic situation literally; to express in an instant the import of the text; to give his music a character closely associated with the matter in hand. In design, further, his utterances had magisterial authority. But he is castigated, as I have said, by a school which, while it anathematises all music evincing the slightest divergence from the

[1] Counterpoint, a bed-covering or counterpane (Shelton, 1612-20).

"sonata-form," or attempting to suggest to the mind of the hearer what was in the mind of the composer, is only too ready to accept, *in another art*, the drab sermonisings of men who turn their studios into conventicles for the elect—a school which, while denying to a composer the right to describe in his programme just what he means, scans with breathless awe the painter's type-written descriptions, issued in horn-book fashion, as if they were the sublimest quotations from Holy Writ.

Monteverde and his school strove to employ music as a means for getting a little nearer the human heart. In the preceding stages, the repression of any strong instinct which might give play to the imagination or suggest the relation of the art to the broader principles of life and of living, had led to a stilted phraseology, and the acceptance of this had discouraged all enterprise in seeking for new outlets. Much as Monteverde's work might have been subversive of the discipline of a conventional school, much as he might have been censured for the misapplication of his talent, others who were to come after him learned from his aberrations, and had their musical sense educated by his.

It demanded no small amount of assurance to handle the motley assemblage of instruments which the dramatic tendencies of the time regarded as indispensable for the due interpretation of musical

ideas. There was a whole-hearted joyousness in this. It was as if the art, still in its green childhood, was passing from the stage of the nursery to the stage of the fairy-tale, when all the instruments were to be dressed up in the most modish style to represent the heroines and hapless lovers, the heavy fathers and portentous tragedians of a drama that was classical according to sixteenth and seventeenth century notions.

Yet what would we not give nowadays to touch these playthings! For Claudio Monteverde was of Cremona, not in himself the only good that came out of that considerable town.

By attempting to find use for every conceivable instrument, Monteverde showed that he was alive to the value of contrasted tone-colour and also possessed an ear which was able to analyse masses of sound and to select the appropriate combinations of instruments. What he lacked in contrapuntal knowledge was amply compensated for by his mastery of an orchestral technique which could not have been by any means a simple matter. For the instruments themselves were in a state of transition; the luthiers were busy with those slight modifications which were to transform the viol into the violin, and this type of stringed instrument had not yet been brought to the stage of uniformity. Monteverde was free to indulge his caprice, and in his orchestra there was an element of

gay abandon which we may well envy. While he foreshadowed certain modern orchestral procedures, he made in one respect a curious anticipation of a method which, it is alleged with a touch of mordant cynicism, is that followed by very "advanced" composers of to-day. In some of his scores he appears to have been content to indicate merely the cues for his various instruments, but it is impossible to say whether these were filled out in the band-parts by the players themselves, or were points at which they could do pretty much what they pleased. Such a plan nowadays is to be commended, for it saves an infinite amount of labour, but unfortunately the very modern composer has to write every note and every mark of expression, even although the effect, to some at least, seems very much as if every man in the orchestra was improvising according to his own sweet will.

But when Monteverde did prescribe his definite aims, his contemporaries shook their heads (as many an orchestral player does when he has to play anything out of the beaten track) at his degrading the noble qualities of their instruments. Noisy must have been the arguments after rehearsal when he had insisted on his strings playing tremolo, bitter must have been the resentment when his violists found that instead of passages which set off their executive powers, they were asked to scrape away on one note,

doing just the sort of thing that any child might do. The same protests awaited Richard Wagner when the violoncellos, even in so old-fashioned a work as the overture to *Tannhäuser*, were wont to indulge in howls (*sotto voce*) when they ought to have been playing the notes before them. Even this, too, is ancient history.

But beyond the development of the musical sense so as to hear sounds unusual to his contemporaries Monteverde possessed yet something more, for he discovered that music could convey an emotion when detached entirely from the text of the dramatic situation, and that by employing a large body of instruments he could give character to his themes. At first the practice was to play the voice-parts of compositions whether they were being sung at the same time or not. It was easy to modify this proceeding so as to disregard the voices and to isolate the instruments completely, to embellish a part, more particularly as technique advanced. Some violist, taking it upon himself to improvise, as a singer of an earlier date might have done, discovered that in order to display his proficiency he could decorate his part with arabesques, and as the composer was in those days invariably an instrumentalist, he saw his opportunity for expansion.

The musical sense had in fact reached that stage in its development when instinct came into play.

The ear discovered that there was something fitting in the instrumental performance of the people's songs and their dances, and the needs of a ceremonious age found in music precisely that adjunct which conferred a dignity upon its more formal customs, as well as a stimulus to its more light-hearted and gay moods. From the conventions of the dance it was found that the theme could be led away from its prescribed statement, and that by means of some deft ornamentation it became in itself a complete organism. It was but a step to detach it from the form of the dance and to give it an individual significance, striving at the same time to invest it with qualities so as to compensate for the absence of words or of action. From these elements, linked together to form a work of important dimensions, grew those musical forms which eventually came to be known as the sonata and the symphony. Into a close analysis of these it is not necessary to enter, but we must take note of their relationship to the gradual development of the faculty of music. Not the least branch of the special sense is that exact appreciation of the plan upon which a work is laid out, of the passing from one phase to another, of the value of contrast, of the indispensable periods of pause requisite in order to throw into relief the various sections and to reconcile apparent inconsistencies.

The transition from one stage to another was

imperceptible; there was no wide divergence of pattern. Characteristics there were in the work of each composer from Monteverde to Bach, but while their value may be esteemed from an archæological standpoint, they offer us little help in elucidating our special study of cerebral development. But we have arrived, as I have just said, at a point further in advance of any that we have already considered. We have seen how the ear sought for new sounds, how it strove to move with freedom from one key to another, but these were merely the first steps that had to be taken before the brain was in a condition to sustain the concentration imperative for the composition of a work in which a theme was handled with breadth and freedom.

First in the process we have memory—the faculty of recording a long stretch of theme in detail and treatment; then there is the mental analysis of the theme whereby a slight variation or a minute alteration suggests an extension of the main idea. Closely on this follows the recognition of sufficiency, when change is called for, so as to form a contrast with more important sections, and to lead them on to further developments. It would be absurd to say that up to the time of Bach or for a considerable period after his day, such an endowment was possessed even by the most distinguished men whose works remain with us. But it is con-

venient to foreshadow here the highest phase which was suggested by the efforts of the composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Without any reference to the work of any given composer, we see that the musical sense was now in a very different state of organisation from what it was in the sixteenth century. But are we to assert that Monteverde's perception was equal to Bach's mature faculty, and if so, how is this to be proved? It appears safer to say that the musical faculty—the last, so far, of whose evolution we are conscious—is part of the general plan of evolution, and that the slow rate of progress up to the seventeenth century in creative and appreciative ability demonstrates to us in the most direct way the mode by which some other sense was evolved in prehistoric times. Its rapidity of development from this point onwards is not incomprehensible when we consider the fact that the human brain had become conscious of certain principles, and that once these were established as what I venture to call "cerebral truisms," the movement of thought became continually swifter and more fertile.

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE CROSS-ROADS

At the outset I referred to the biologist's abrupt dismissal of music as a manifestation of cerebral power, and questioned his lack of interest, if not his sense of justice, in contenting himself with a mere general statement as to the probable origin of the "ear of the mind." We know that from the earliest times of which there is any record "music" has had some part in man's existence. To admit this, to describe it as one of the most mysterious of man's faculties, without any attempt to estimate its value or to weigh its destiny—to be confronted with a problem and yet to be content to put it on one side in favour of matters small in their consequences to man—betokens a strange indifference. Darwin, for instance, who was at pains to investigate the back-woods of man's thought, and to burrow under ground for facts remotely linking man to his place in creation, was blind to a phase of cerebral development which was proceeding under his very eyes; he

was deaf to those sounds which were in vain alluring him to a study of a human conception infinitely more wonderful than any sublunary theme which he proposed to make his own.

I should be the last to underestimate the "utility" (shall I call it?) of many botanical investigations, for Nature is so marvellous in her works that it is right and admirable that her worshippers should be many. But botany and its analogies are more complex than the thing which we call "music." It is infinitely more difficult to account for the reasoning power which a plant possesses than to place a human faculty within range of its adjuncts. How, for instance, are we to explain why it is that a tendril of a vine is pushed forth in the direction of the nearest support? How, again, is it that the soft green flexure of early summer, so easily undone when the sap is up and the wind is light, becomes a hard fibre of many coils, stout enough to anchor the cane and preserve its brittle joints against the gales of November? How do the trees know the seasons better than we, and calculate, almost to an hour, the moment for a display of vigour, for the making up of lost time?

Inquiries such as these may not throw a light upon the musical sense, but they have their own lesson, whether explained by the man of science or noted by the musician.

Once again, despite the view that music is "useless," I repeat that everything under the sun has its purpose. Music in itself is only "useless" until man, upon whom the burden of proof is laid, has found out its use. Its existence in all past times demonstrates its necessity to man. We may not be able to explain that necessity, but at least we know enough of the myriad designs of Nature to feel sure that the necessity is there. Music, in fact, must be essential to life for some purpose or other. We have already seen how it fell into the control of the most far-seeing organisation of which western humanity, at least, has cognisance, namely, the Papacy, and that alone should put us on the alert.

At last we reach a point where we find it not so essential to life, to mankind, as to one man, and here perhaps we have a glimmering of its purpose. We feel ourselves on sure ground when we are able to isolate an instance of a composer who, without a taint of worldliness, was content to seek for himself his own *via salutis*—who, without a vestige of devouring ambition or jealous impudence, poured forth for the wonderment of later generations all the hallowed inspirations of his white soul.

For in Bach, to the glory of man's achievement and the shame of many whose lives we are glad to forget, we have a supreme example of a composer who went his own way unmoved by, if not uncon-

scious of, all outward dissensions. If we plan his journeyings to and fro, we find them confined within a small trapezium whose angles are Hamburg, Kassel, Ohrdruf, and Dresden, corresponding almost exactly with Exeter, London, Peterborough, and Leeds, an area restricted enough even in his days, while still more strangely it was almost the only one in Europe which, during his period of activity, was left unthreshed by the flail of war.

But if Bach did not wander far afield and rub shoulders with men representing all branches of energy, he did not pass his existence, as far as music is concerned, in a mere backwater. For the art was a tradition in his family, he was acquainted with every aspect of it, he was indefatigable in providing himself with copies of works which had impressed him, he did not hesitate to supply what seemed to him to be deficiencies in other men's compositions. In his environment he was particularly happy. He had not to fight against parental interdicts, he was not compelled to exercise his musical instinct surreptitiously, and he grew up in a serene atmosphere in which the tools of his craft were in constant use, ready, when he was still a child, for his little fingers to coax sounds from them.

In one respect he was a law unto himself, and we are confronted with what is perhaps an entirely new explanation of his genius—one, too, which is not

wildly improbable, for it throws a strong light upon much of his work.

We are told, indeed, that in the playing upon keyed instruments such as the clavichord and harpsichord, it was the custom to avoid as far as possible the use of the thumb and little finger. This prevailed in the days prior to Bach, and it is incredible that the complicated music that is to be found in many old collections could actually have been performed under such restrictions. Even to-day the most accomplished harpsichordist, with ten fingers at liberty instead of six or eight, meets with many a stumbling-block.

But we are also told that Bach disregarded these limitations of fingering and was one of the first to put in play the thumb and little finger as well. We know, further, that he was esteemed as a performer upon keyed instruments, and it is not unreasonable to put forward a theory regarding his special technique. Every musician is aware that there are some individuals who, although destitute of all knowledge of music and incapable even of identifying and reading the notes, possess the extraordinary gift of being able to memorise and reproduce upon the piano what they have heard. It is a gift that, as far as I know, has never been investigated : it has features which are startling, for not only can the

possessor of it enrich with ampler harmonies what he has heard, but he is at home in any key. In other words, he can transpose by ear into any key chosen. He prefers those which used to be known as extreme, namely, those with a large number of sharps and flats in their signature. I am not aware of any biographical record which attributes such a gift as this to Bach, but I am inclined to believe that he possessed it. Two reasons support this belief: first, he chose for himself a fingering which was a direct refutation of all that had been maintained and taught by his predecessors: secondly, if he had possessed this gift, he must have realised that in certain keys he produced a harsh sound, and thereby was led to investigate and confirm a system of tuning which would deprive remote keys of any uncertainty of intonation. It is supposed that the new fingering came into general vogue, owing to the extended use of the black notes through Bach's insistence upon "equal temperament," a matter which will be considered presently, but there is no explanation why Bach, more than anyone else, happened to discover how the black notes could be employed to the fullest extent.

Transposition is part of the equipment of every musician nowadays, but it may have been a rarer accomplishment in the period which we are consider-

ing, and it is likely that in the circumstances of his surroundings Bach was able to play by ear long before he had regular lessons.[1]

We know that Bach was in the habit of tuning his own instruments of the harpsichord type so as to suit his own practice. At the same time he met with organs in which a system of dual tuning was present: here he had not merely the white and black notes to touch, but a set accessory to what we know as the black notes and employed in order to be in tune with the invariable pitch of the white notes.

Let me explain briefly what is at the root of the matter.

The composers who preceded Bach confined themselves to sounds that appeared to be not out of tune. The rule, a vestige of the treatment of the ecclesiastical modes, was to employ for embroidery and harmony only such notes as belonged to the particular mode selected. Then it was found possible to move from the mode into some other one in close relation to it by modifying or altering one note. Thus one foreign element was introduced into the key and modulation came into use. But it was found that too many of these foreign elements

[1] It may be noted as an interesting point, that there is an individuality even in the way the fingers are used. An accomplished pianist often finds it awkward to play passages which have been written and executed with facility by a composer with no pretensions whatsoever to technique.

produced an unpleasant effect, because although the notes of the chromatic scale might severally be dead in tune for the purposes of some particular chord or key, they were not so for all. In the key of E flat, for instance, the note called E flat was not identical in sound with the note called D sharp in the key of B, although the *touche* which was played was the same.[1]

In some organs in Bach's time there were actually two *touches*, E flat and D sharp, controlling two sets of pipes tuned differently so as to get over the unpleasantness of sound caused by the occurrence in a chord of a note which actually was foreign to it. Bach was sensitive to these differences and sought to overcome them by a frank recognition of the defects of the scale. He saw that in order to widen the scope of music, to pass freely from one key to another without any disturbing effect on the ear, it was necessary to acknowledge the impossibility of a mathematically exact tuning for all the intervals. Therefore a compromise had to be made and this was done by admitting into each interval except the octave a minute variation so that all should stand in equal relationship with one another.

In this way he brought every key into the service of

[1] As there is some ambiguity conveyed by the word "key," the French "*touche*" is used here for the actual piece of mechanism which the finger depresses.

music, and, to substantiate the justness of his innovation, he wrote his *Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues*, each in a different key, demonstrating thereby that the keys, which his predecessors had avoided because of a want of evenness in the relationship of one interval to another, could be put upon an equal footing with those to which musicians had hitherto confined themselves.

In this way he laid the foundation of our modern system of harmony, and it is important to remember that this was formulated for practical purposes only as recently as the latter half of the eighteenth century.

The theory—for despite the varied phases of human emotion that are to be found in these immortal *Preludes and Fugues*, they were written solely to enunciate a theory—enlarged the scope of music. The relationship of one key to another was established on a wider basis : it became possible to move from one key to another in a fashion that, had it been attempted to any great extent in earlier days, might have brought its rash perpetrator to the stake. Bach recognised that his idea could be carried out only in works written for instruments which could be tuned in his way. Therefore in his organ works he confined himself to those keys which could be employed without any disconcerting effect upon the ear. For, as will be understood, the pipes of the

organ could not be tuned with the same ease and rapidity as the strings of the harpsichord.

Bach's musical sense, as we sum it up in his works, was in a higher state of development than that of any of his predecessors. He had the instinct to feel that beyond the conventional methods of the music of his own day something of immense significance existed. He asserted his convictions in a work which, whether technically or emotionally, remains a marvellous contrivance of man's brain, but although he was able to assure himself that a hitherto uncharted world of sound lay beyond the horizon, he hesitated to go in search of it. In other words, he demonstrated his theorem, but neglected to put it into practice.

It cannot be said that he lacked opportunity; his activity was incessant and his life-work was colossal. How, then, are we to account for the fact that he failed to employ the means whose existence he had demonstrated? We must remember that in much of his music the organ had an important part, and it will be evident from what has been said about its tuning that there were practical difficulties to be encountered. But as regards much of his other work we do not find that insistence upon his discovery which, if the example of a modern composer may be taken as a guide, might have formed the theme of portentous letters to his long-suffering

friends. It is more likely that he realised the difficulty of employing with freedom an ampler range of harmony as a basis for those contrapuntal displays of which he was so shrewd a master. For counterpoint to Bach was something in the nature of an obsession. He felt that at all costs the parts must be kept active, that every bar must be filled with its due allowance of semiquavers. His mastery of this department of technique curbed and repressed much of the genuine feeling that he possessed, so that a composition often became merely a dissertation in the language of music, amazingly ingenious and intricate, but for the most part devoid of human and emotional purpose. From the storehouse of his learning he was able to select devices of infinite variety, and his astonishing and prolific resource seemed never to fail him when committing to paper what was often to him rather an exercise of his talent than a thought of deep significance to his hearers.

In an analysis which is only remotely connected with æsthetical principles we must beware of the enthusiasms that are founded upon tradition. It is not difficult for a man destitute of all creative power to build up by rule a vast and imposing erection of counterpoint. The framework of the contrivance, in the elemental forms which are perpetuated even in our own day, must consist of a series of closely related, interlocking parts, which permit of an un-

obstructed flow of conventional embroidery. The harmonic base, in other words, must be of the simplest kind. It is not necessary to enter upon a technical explanation, but it may be said that, as far as counterpoint has been brought in modern times, the more chromatic the structure is the less easy is it to apply strict contrapuntal principles. Hence a choral work, for example, carried out on orthodox lines, cannot be anything else than a slavish imitation of devices whose possibilities were exhausted years ago.

If Bach had put his theories into practice he would have resorted to methods alien to the interpretative means at his disposal; he would have found himself in an atmosphere, as it were, which stifled what was to him the very breath of his body. Therefore, for safety, he confined himself to methods which did not present insuperable obstacles.

It cannot be said that his sense for orchestral colour was developed much in advance of that of his predecessors. There is little difference in notes and style between the part for a trumpet and the roulades for a soprano. Every instrument was treated with the same impartiality, worrying out some counterpoint with a sublime disregard for its appropriateness. But he perceived in a vague way that combinations of instruments were requisite, and succeeded in employing every conceivable device in writing for

the strings. We do not find any striking evidence of the expansion of his orchestral sense as age advanced. In our knowledge of the handling of the orchestra we owe nothing to him, just as we owe nothing to his contemporary Handel, whose instrumental technique is practically the same from the first to the last of his works.

In the enormous amount of his works not a little seems to have been written without much regard for the means for its interpretation. There are instrumental passages of such complexity that they are to-day the despair of many an executant of the highest skill, and it has been suggested that these were played on organ stops which conveyed their tone-colour. In his works for instruments of the clavier type, whose sustaining power was feeble, he broke up his material so that instead of massive chords ill-suited to the peculiarities of the instruments, he wrote arpeggios and running figures, each note of which would stand out clearly and not result, as when played on a modern pianoforte, in a blurred scramble. Much of the contrapuntal work for the clavier must have been written so as to meet the limitations of the instrument. A very slight acquaintance with the clavichord or the modification of it by Zumpe will show this clearly. It is only on such an instrument that moving parts come out with a charm and sympathy, almost with an

intimacy which set us back instantly to less strenuous times.

This is not the place to discuss Bach's achievement beyond the limits which our inquiry assigns, and if I omit all reference to those works of his which abide with us as imperishable monuments of his sincerity and blameless life, it is only because they do not bear upon our subject.

Sufficient, however, has been said to indicate that his faculty for music had reached a point far in advance of that of any other composer. The bewildering amount of his works of all kinds, from the lightest forms to the grave and noble strains of his B minor Mass and his Passion Music, shows that he possessed a fluidity of thought and a swiftness of idea which we meet with now for the first time in our survey. It is not to be gainsaid that a close analysis of nine-tenths of his work might show much that is mechanical, possibly even laboured. That is no concern of ours. What is of paramount importance to us is the fact that music in his hands became a new thing, that from the dusty records of an effete ecclesiastical usage he selected all that was most fitting for preservation, and with this material created for man a new power in his service, in his ministerium, in his worship. In his sagacious comprehension of all that is most worthy, attained, as we know, not without scrupulous care and revision, so

that all should be perfect, he carried the sense of music as a mental process further, probably, than he was aware.

We may take pleasure in his instrumental works and wonder at the intricate patterns which he wove ; we may listen breathlessly to the web of sound which he unfolded from a simple sequence of notes, to be decorated in transition with delicate tracery, carrying our minds into vague spheres of thought, till the boom of the pedals reconciles misty imaginings with the adamantine bedrock of things as they must be. There is no limit to the scope of the man. Yet the aspect we prefer is that which shows a profound knowledge of the human heart. The mere jugglery of notes and rules need not irritate us. Bach's instinct led him to create thought by the sounds that were insistent in his mind, and no matter what may be yet to come in music, he was the first to demonstrate the intimate yet indefinable association of sound with mental processes.

At the beginning of this chapter it was suggested that we were entering a period of music in which we might find some solution of the mystery of the faculty. Music to Bach was not so much an art as a fixed habit of thought. He possessed such a mastery over the elementary principles upon which music is founded that we may almost regard this command as an instinct. In the region of man's higher faculties

we accept without further inquiry the existence of certain powers, accounting for them by the somewhat facile explanation that they are the result of education or of some inexplicable force.

But, as regards music, let us imagine a new state of conditions ; let us assume that we have nothing whatsoever in the shape of instruments, that the instruments as we know them are merely symbols for special tone-colours, and, further, that the faculty for music is common to all mankind, existing in individuals in different degrees of strength and potency, and capable of being transmitted to others in writing and comprehended in silence by them. The notation becomes in this way a graphic formula.

To-day we regard music as a special gift, involving years of labour to master it, understood in the fullest sense only by a very few individuals in the entire mass of humanity that peoples the globe. Yet reduced to its elements, it involves no more special application of brain than does the writing of this sentence. No one dreams of investigating why the shapes of certain letters convey one meaning and not another ; why groups of these letters should express to the eye a definite sound which in turn conveys to the brain a subjective or objective impression. To comprehend a sentence we do not need to read it aloud. The trained musician does not need to sing or play a written sentence of music in order to hear

it. Further, in inquiring into the thing that is written we do not consider the balance between brain and eye and hand : the pen that runs so easily over the paper is controlled by an organisation just as mysterious and complicated as the musical sense. But from long familiarity we have become habituated to certain results without examining their origin. We also accept without a moment's thought the existence of certain mental properties in man which we vaguely attribute to remote causes so intricate that we find the explanation of them beyond our powers. The poetical faculty is a very ancient one, but from long association we have come to accept it as an essential without further inquiry. Music is, however, new, and we have not been sufficiently broken in to be able to place it among the other essentials in man's existence.

From what has just been said it will be gathered that there is a strong presumption that in time to come the whole aspect of music will be changed, and that man will employ the musical sense as an everyday property whose origin is too remote for him to trace.

In Bach's case music was essential to the man himself. He was beyond all worldly considerations in exercising his faculty. There was no necessity for him to devote himself to the art for a practical end. He had no immediate hope of convincing the world

that his work meant anything either as a help or as a hindrance. He possessed a gift which he exercised to the utmost limits of his power : it was essential that he should do this, even if he had found the world up in arms against him. It was his way of reasoning and it was of no great consequence to him whether the things that he thought did not present themselves to others in quite the same dress as they did to him. It was enough that he placed them on record.

CHAPTER IX

THE LUTHIER AND HIS ART

In a survey of the musical sense it is necessary for us to take into account the instruments that were at the disposal of composers, their transitions, and the process of "selection" which has evolved the modern orchestra, tracing the steps by which we have arrived at our present, but by no means final, acceptance of certain instrumental combinations. It is clear that only the merest outline of the subject is possible, but, more particularly in connection with the later phases of music, there are points worthy of our attention. Owing to the overlapping of one period by another, to which reference has already been made, it is not always possible to ascribe every stage in the development of the orchestra to a definite date. Much, also, that is discussed here anticipates a stage of music which we have yet to consider, but it is more convenient to break the continuity at one place than at many.

Of the organ little need be said : its influence has not been of such importance in extending the musical faculty as one would at first think, and its evolution is a subject entirely detached from our inquiry.

Up to a certain point the progress of the musical sense is exemplified by the progress of instruments, but it is always the technical development of the composer that leads the way. I have already spoken of the good fortune of music in having in the mechanical means for its production instruments which in themselves possess a beauty of form. Those who contrived them were not unconscious of an effort to delight the eye as well as the ear. The violin, for instance, no matter how we regard it, is a marvellous piece of work. To one with no curiosity about music it presents itself as a wonderful example of the distribution and adjustment of mechanical tension and strain ; to another it is an exquisite contrivance, built with the perfection of craftsmanship ; to a third it is a demonstration of the combining of curves so as to produce matchless symmetry of form ; while to the musician it means, in addition, years of unceasing toil to evoke those sounds which express the whole gamut of the emotions.

He who takes joy in the work of men's hands as well as in the impress of his brain may find pleasure in noting the anxiety, the loving care, which the old artificers displayed. The viol to the man who made

it was a perfect thing. No doubt some virtuoso of the hour frequented the workshop to display his technique and to pass criticisms and suggest improvements. But the maker was just as much concerned with mechanical subtleties as with sounds. It was his to shape a hollow box, to calculate the infinities of purchase and strain, to give room for the bow to approach the strings, to build the thing substantially and to labour over its decoration. The desire to confer upon the handiwork some distinction was not solely for love of the purpose for which it was made —it was for love of the thing itself, and this is seen again and again in appliances for everyday use just as much as in instruments.

The man who made a hammer studied the proportion between the weight of metal and the use which it was to serve ; but he saw beyond that use, so he chiselled away an edge left sharp in the forging and made an even bevel, with perhaps a tiny moulding to finish it off. Then he countered the damp in the air by tracing a pattern over those parts which were of the structure, but of less importance in the toil, and the common tool became encrusted with the very delight of its maker. It was as if he were bent on distracting the useful thing from its tedious purpose, adorning it so that it should take a special pride in itself. There was no extravagance of taste ; every line was harmonious and appropriate. The crafts-

man who followed his work from the rough matrix to the polished gem loved it more and more as it grew to perfection, and he grudged no pains to make the means as worthy as the end. Time was of no account to him ; there was no illiterate demagogue at his gates, haranguing with raucous voice, gesticulating with hands all thumbs. Persuasion is only peaceful when it comes from within, from the conscience, from the willingness to do, from the quiet gladness that even the utmost of man's effort is too little—not that the least exertion is too much. It is well for us that some instruments were brought to perfection in an age when disloyalty and fraud had not yet been raised by Act of Parliament to the seat of virtue.

In the development of the stringed instruments every step, simple though it may appear to the eye, involved modifications of the entire structure. The lute-makers were contriving shapes which should bear the tension of many strings. It was this problem, quite as much as any question of tone, that taxed the ingenuity of the craftsman. From the earliest instrument of the viol type to the perfect form of the violin, from the progenitor of the harpsichord to the modern pianoforte, tension was the crux, and in the instance which is most familiar to us, the gentle pluck of the quill set on the harpsichord jack was only replaced by the impact

of a hammer, when some one conceived the idea of strengthening the frame on which the wires were stretched. It is curious that this simple solution of a mechanical difficulty took so long to present itself. The method of attaching the strings of the lute to a bar fixed to the surface of the belly imposed the strain on the weakest part of the instrument, and no strengthening beneath the belly could counteract the thrust, to a slight extent upwards, but mainly longitudinally, towards the insertion of the strings in the rigid neck. Here, again, was a mechanical problem demanding much less resource than the carving of the sound-hole or rose, itself an exquisite thing chiselled with the utmost delicacy. The shaping and modelling of the back, formed out of many staves, often sumptuously embellished, was no trifling achievement of craftsmanship. Yet the essence of the instrument, its power of giving forth sound, does not seem to have called into play any special ingenuity. The lute was a costly instrument only to be acquired by the wealthy ; its notation was a complicated affair, totally different from any other system of writing music ; it was extremely difficult to keep in tune, and equally difficult to play. These conditions limited its scope, and it may have been coveted as much for its appearance as for its practical use.

It may be remarked, in parenthesis, that the

amount of decoration on instruments with a keyboard was carried to a stage far beyond anything seen in later days, excepting the attempts that have been made from time to time to conquer the lines of the pianoforte, and to relieve the monotony of its case. In the older examples of the precursors of the modern instrument, not only were the cases themselves works of art in painting and gesso, but even the boxes in which they were kept for safety were covered with landscapes or pastoral scenes in tempera. The keys were enriched with inlay, and it is a question whether these instruments were put to practical use or were merely instruments de luxe, which graced the salon and bore witness to the taste and wealth of their possessors. Judging by the number that have escaped the ravages of time, there must have been a huge industry for their production, and months, if not years, must have been spent over some specimens. The voice is gone, the frame is but a shell encasing the dust left by the worm ; only the rose and the decorations remain, and the keys fingered by some smiling donzella while she sang her wooer to his doom.

In the case of the viol and violin, decoration was employed with far greater restraint. These were more popular instruments, and were left unadorned, though Cellini is said to have used his art on a violin for Gaspar di Salò. At the same time there

was probably a recognition that every part of the violin was sensitive to vibrations, and that these might be interrupted by inlay or carving. There was little of the instrument that could be left for sumptuous display, and decoration was ultimately restricted to the head, which was sometimes shaped like that of a lion—sometimes, and at a later period invariably, carved with the beautiful volute or scroll. The solitary piece of inlay was the purfling, and this served a severely utilitarian purpose.

As music advanced it was found that, by modifying and adapting the ancient stringed instruments that were played with a bow, the voice parts of a composition could be reproduced on them, and, after endless experiments, the viol type reached some uniformity of shape. Its evolution is one of the strangest in the records of craftsmanship; its most insignificant details have each their own importance and curious history. Its dimensions, its curves, the position and size of the bouts and sound-holes, the length of the neck—even the design of the bridge, so unconsciously decorative, yet cut with the fullest sense of the value of its line and of the resistance it offered to the strings—none of these points was determined without infinite pains. Yet having arrived at an approximate pattern, the viol makers were not content

until after further researches they had evolved the violin as we have it to-day. It is not necessary for us to discuss the several steps that were made in transition. Wonderful as the progress of the instrument has been it is still more wonderful that the ingenuity of the past two hundred years has effected nothing to "improve" the model that is so familiar to us.

With a complete set of stringed—or, more correctly, bowed—instruments which had one timbre in common, the composer had ready to his hands the means for interpreting his works, and there was little risk of his compositions becoming obsolete owing to changes in the compass or pattern of existing types. As the skill of the players became extended, the composer was encouraged to write music which should engross the attention of his interpreters and display their ability, and this aspect of musical development attained such excellence that the old violin music had exhausted nearly every device of technique before Mozart was born. The extension of the compass upwards is the only innovation, but this does not affect the general principles, which remain to this day unaltered.

There is considerable probability, however, that the old violins which we have are not identically the same in every respect as when they left the hands of their

makers two or three hundred years ago. The pitch has been raised, and this has imposed an additional strain which has called for a modification of some parts of their structure. At the same time the substituting of new blocks to replace wood that was doubtful, and the strengthening of parts so as to cope with new conditions, may have changed the tone. The thinning of the neck has enabled the hand to stretch to "positions" which formerly were out of its reach, and the volume of sound may in some cases have been increased by a reduction of the thickness of the back.

The strings were accepted as the basis of the orchestra because of their uniformity of timbre and wide compass, but this was done at a time when the musical sense was unable to foreshadow the possibilities which lay within the scope even of this small combination of instruments. The variety of tone-colour which Monteverde's sense demanded,—bewildering and grotesque as it would seem to modern ears, and no doubt frequently was to his own,—was an early indication of that desire for sonority and character, which has developed in our own day to so amazing an extent. It may be, too, that his extraordinary orchestra was a machine contrived as much to outrage the musical proprieties of his time, as to interpret the effects at which he aimed. Even in modern days there is something to be done with

an orchestra consisting of the following instruments[1]:—

2 Harpsichords.	2 Viole di Gamba.
2 Bass Viols.	4 Trombones.
10 Tenor Viols.	1 Regal.
1 Double Harp.	2 Cornets.
2 Little French Violins.	1 Little Octave Flute.
2 Large Guitars.	1 Clarion.
2 Organs of Wood.	3 Trumpets with Mutes.

Bach confirmed the use of the strings, and established them on a permanent footing in the orchestra. The instruments which he passed on to us are the viol and violin family, the flute, hautboy, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, and drum. It is unnecessary here to specify the other instruments used in his scores, which are in course of being revived and added to the modern orchestra. It is, however, important to note that, apart from the strings, Bach's orchestra was not fixed. It is probable that for the actual performance of many of his works he had to rely upon such instruments as chance threw in his way, supplying deficiencies by the organ. This may explain why there was so great a variety of isolated parts written for instruments which till recently were obsolete. It would almost appear as if Bach considered the tone-colour of his various

1 Monteverde's orchestra used for the accompaniment of his *Orfeo*, produced at Mantua in 1608. Grove, iii. 512, Second Edition.

instruments without taking into account their technical capabilities. It is quite probable that in many instances he never actually heard his music performed on the instruments which he indicated, but played their parts on the organ, using a stop which reproduced the timbre required. This may explain the mystery of his trumpet parts, for it is difficult to believe that the instruments themselves, as well as their technique, should have disappeared completely. Some of his partitas for the flute were impossible of execution on the contemporary instrument, and they still remain of great difficulty in spite of modern mechanical improvements.

We are now at the point when the ear began to decide which instruments were to survive as fittest. It cannot be said that the momentous verdict was delivered by one man; it came about by the fine adjustment of the sense in discriminating between those sounds which were agreeable, and those which marred the general effect by their harshness. Among the wood-wind instruments there were numerous types which had done good service, but we can only conjecture how it was that the instruments of this group which still are in use came to be chosen. Much naturally depended on the existence of a sufficient supply of players. Their increasing skill, too, in producing a good tone, combined, no doubt, with their aptitude in improving the mechanism, tended

to preserve them. The lack of good players on the clarinet, even in Mozart's time, probably delayed the adoption of this instrument into the orchestra until after the flute, hautboy, and bassoon had become regular members. It is, at the same time, not improbable that the instruments of the wood-wind group that were selected were at that date the least disagreeable in their tone, and also were less difficult to play upon than those which we too hastily condemn as obsolete. For if we were to develop the other instruments of the flute, hautboy, and clarinet type at present in disuse, on the lines which have brought these instruments to the state in which we now have them, we would have at our command almost an unlimited scheme of tones.[1]

When composers found that they had a body of players who could be depended upon, their music entered upon a fresh phase, but there was still some hesitancy about employing the new force ; the burden of the work still fell upon the strings, and in much of the earlier symphonic work the wind seems scarcely indispensable. Much, indeed, is of the class of the string quartet, here and there timidly broken up in order to make room for the wind. There is no employment of the wind as an independent force, and it might easily be omitted without altering the structure.

But an important stage was reached when the

[1] See p. 193

proportion of one group of instruments to another was determined. This was arrived at as much by local and financial considerations as by any deep sense of what was fit. For the orchestras that existed were, for the most part, attached to the court of some grandee, and the number of the band had to be restricted. At the same time the instrumentalist did not always profess music as a vocation which absorbed all his attention and energies, and occasions must have arisen when performances were given with an incomplete orchestra.

The Haydn and Mozart orchestra consisted of about thirty-five musicians, the wind and percussion accounting for from eleven to thirteen instruments—that is to say, the orchestra comprised flutes, hautboys, clarinets (occasionally), bassoons, horns, trumpets, trombones (occasionally), drums and strings. It became practically a convention, stereotyped like so much else in music, from which it was heretical to depart. The same force of instruments (the clarinets being now invariably used) was employed by Beethoven.

But except on paper this orchestra was not precisely similar in effect to a modern one consisting of the same instruments. For it was only after Beethoven's death that mechanical improvements in the instruments themselves were introduced so as to enlarge their scope, to amplify their technique, and

to open up an entirely new region to the composer. The alteration in pitch, to which reference has already been made, affected all the instruments of the wood-wind group, but, in addition, the mode of producing their notes was almost completely changed. We need not discuss who it was that introduced each separate improvement, but Boehm is generally credited with having invented the system of fingering which, whatever the merits of the question, is now called after him. This method was first applied to the flute, but eventually, with perhaps some modification, it became extended to the other wood-wind instruments.[1]

In doing this Boehm not only altered the conditions of performance, but actually changed the character of the instruments, so that it was as if an entirely new group had been introduced into the orchestra. These modifications had several important results. The instrumentalists found their parts capable of performance without a feeling of exasperation towards the composer, who apparently had scarcely consulted their convenience ; they found the expressive side of their various instruments carried to a stage when they could make the most of their opportunities for display ; there was less friction and a deepened pleasure in work, a stronger confidence in themselves, and a keener interest in all that concerned their art.

[1] See the note at the end of this chapter.

Important as were these mechanical improvements, reforms of still greater moment were at hand. The scope of the horns and trumpets up to the time of Beethoven and for some little space after was restricted. They could not play a complete scale, but only some notes in it here and there, with, however, the utmost perfection of tone. The notes that Beethoven wrote for his horns and trumpets amounted in all to barely a dozen, spaced at definite places up the scale, and they were used only in a restricted number of keys. To-day we can use four times that number of notes at every point of the scale, irrespective of key.

It is easy to find an example of the method of writing for horns and trumpets at this time. All the notes which these instruments are called upon to play in the last movement of Mozart's "Jupiter" symphony are the following: G (below the treble stave), C, E, G, C, D, E, G, taking the notes in their ascending order. These constitute only two chords, that of C, which is complete, and that of G, which is incomplete owing to the absence of B. Therefore throughout the entire movement these instruments could not play any chords other than those of C and G. They were not of much use in any other key, and if the music reached a modulation they could not be employed.

In modern days the abrupt cessation of their sound frequently disconcerts us as much as the persistence

of one note for a number of bars without any relief, and it is difficult to believe that the effect was pleasing to Mozart. The horn and trumpet parts in symphonies of this period always sound like parts played on defective instruments which possess only a note here and there. It may ultimately come about that a conductor, without taking all the world into his confidence, will rewrite some of these parts, completing the chords so that they do not invariably sound bare fifths and octaves, filling in at the same time in certain passages the notes that had to be omitted owing to the limitations of the instruments.

At this period we have many signs that composers recognised these limitations, and therefore it is difficult to understand why they used horns and trumpets at all, unless their timbre was masked by the overpowering and harsh quality of the reeds. In the first movement of the "Eroica" Symphony Beethoven chose a theme which could be performed on the horn, defective as it was. But in his Ninth Symphony there occurs a famous passage, which, despite all manner of elaborate excuses, can only be regarded as a *lapsus calami*. Here the fourth horn [1] has some eight bars to play which are utterly unlike the thousands of bars that he wrote for this instrument. These notes were not written with any prescience. Nowhere else in this or in any

[1] Printed as fourth in the Peters edition, pp. 152 to 154.

other symphony is there a sign to suggest that the passage was actually intended to be played on the horn. It must have been beyond the reach of any contemporary performer, and it is reasonable to suppose that Beethoven mistook the line of the score on which he wrote the notes. It is most unlikely that he would have departed from his usual practice in order to disconcert a musician.

It is expedient to dwell upon this aspect of the orchestra, because we are able, as it were, to reconstruct the sounds which would appear to have been acceptable to Beethoven's contemporaries, and the result seems scarcely tolerable, in spite of our having become case-hardened by the strong blare of the modern orchestra. Beethoven and the composers immediately preceding him owe not a little of their reputation to a refinement of technique and a study of mechanical devices which came into use after they were in their graves. The notes that they wrote had the same theoretical relation then as now, but the actual sounds which they conveyed to the ear of the mind are not the same. It is the custom to refer the student to Beethoven's orchestration, but it is altogether forgotten that any combination in which the wood-wind, or horns or trumpets are present has now a totally different character, and that, while we go back repeatedly to Beethoven's orchestration for advice and help, we do so with the

recollection of passages which have been impressed upon us by a modern orchestra composed of modern instruments—we do so not because we rely upon Beethoven's judgment.

I have purposely omitted all reference to the introduction of valves for certain of the brass instruments. This point I will discuss in a later chapter when we come to consider the expansion of the orchestra in modern times.

Note.—Before Boehm's time the makers of the flute cut the holes in the tube so as to suit the fingers of the executants, though they were aware that these places were not scientifically correct. Boehm (as his name is more commonly spelt) cut the holes in the scientifically correct spots, and therefore had to invent a mechanism which would operate on the holes, and yet lie conveniently within the control of the fingers. Until this system was introduced, the instrumentalists were so occupied with playing in tune that they were less concerned with elaborate technique and good tone-production. The question is dealt with at length in "An Essay on the Construction of Flutes," by Böhm (thus printed), edited by W. S. Broadwood; London: Rudall, Carte and Co., 1882.

CHAPTER X

THE FOUNDING OF MODERN MUSIC

BACH at last collected the stray threads spun by his pedantic forebears and showed how they could be woven into a web of countless patterns. His resource was inexhaustible ; intricacy of design and thematic perplexity grew into his fabric till one stands bewildered that such a cerebral tissue could have emerged knit, even, flawless, from the threadbare rags of a worn-out formula. The magnitude of his accomplishment was acknowledged by his contemporaries in characteristic fashion. They ignored it. Even those who came after him, when music was well on its feet and able to stand upright without any prop, showed no disposition to hail him as the Great Liberator. It is incomprehensible that among musicians his work should have been so easily forgotten and that nothing should have been preserved but a vague tradition regarding him. Yet the period which we are considering was not very

far from the nineteenth century—a period when much of the music that seemed to satisfy the requirements of the time strikes us as naïve and childish. The neglect of Bach by his immediate successors shows that he was far in advance of his time, and that the musical faculty had yet to be developed in order that there should be widespread recognition and appreciation of his genius. There was not, in fact, any extensive range of the musical sense. It was occupied mainly with solving problems, and the human ear was content with a sameness and artificiality in which there was no depth or special significance. It is unquestionably true that this can be said of a great deal that Bach wrote, but he found in his art something more. For the emancipation of man's opinions from an irksome self-examination, the knowledge that each individual must rely upon himself in the great crises of life and not shift his burdens to the unsteady shoulders of a purely theoretical intermediary, determined the current of thought so that every man began to realise his responsibilities.

Bach's intense sincerity and his conviction of what was very meet, right, and his bounden duty is reflected in the amount of work which was written for the Church. In spite of much that is formal, much that is expressed with a mannerism which does not strike modern ears as altogether appropriate,

in his great choral music he nevertheless showed the influence of great thoughts upon his own profound imagination.

There is a marked contrast when we turn to Haydn and Mozart, for, heretical as the assertion may appear, their instrumental works show little introspection. Obvious, trivial and superficial is their style from a modern standpoint. Graceful and tuneful they may be, very delightful and glowing with sunshine, but they suggest nothing of the more serious inquiries of the mind. It is only when they have a text to interpret that they touch the graver issues. It is impossible to conceive either composer guarding his art as a sacred trust, especially when we consider the occasions for which much of their music was written. In those days a musician was glad enough to take his place along with the lackeys on the comptroller's pay-sheet, and he had every temptation to be indifferent as to the quality of his work so long as it fulfilled the requirements of his patron. If Haydn and Mozart were capable of profound expression in their work they certainly gave scanty indication of it, maintaining the atmosphere of their music for the most part at one constant level. It is music that saves man the trouble of having to think: it is not music that compels him to do so.

This view may be at variance with criticisms and

opinions which hitherto have been accepted as inviolable, but, as regards the aspect of music with which we are dealing, we are compelled to scrutinise the indications of mental development which the art supplies, and, although this estimate at first sight may appear irreverent, I would gladly welcome any elucidation of a Haydn or a Mozart symphony which would demonstrate incontrovertibly that its composer had plumbed to their depths the abysses of man's thought. It is of no avail to say that their works were never meant for such a purpose. That is only to emphasise the fact that they were written to order, that they were laid out for a purely superficial end. If Haydn and Mozart had possessed any wide range of thought, their music would have shown it in spite of the use for which it was destined, for a man is known by his work—most of all a composer—and it is possible with certainty to lay one's finger on compositions which bear the stamp of deep personal impressions. No composer except the mechanic of the stereotyped school can resist the impulse to fling conventions and the requirements of others to the winds, and, setting at naught all restrictions, express his feelings with freedom, even with defiance. Somewhere or other in his work the composer must be himself. This is not to say that neither composer ever was himself in his music : on the contrary, each gave forth all that he was capable of uttering, but the

musical sense was not sufficiently advanced to come into correlation with man's other faculties.

Psychologically Mozart's case is unique. Of the burden of life he had his share, many times over, but in his instrumental compositions there is not a vestige of a sign, saving in one, or perhaps two, chamber works, that he realised the depth and magnitude of man's estate. The isolated examples in his music written to words show that he had some comprehension of a dramatic idea, but I am unable to admit this of his other works.

In his tussle with the world nearly every composer comes out of the fight with his share of wounds, some too deep ever to be healed, and their imprints may be traced in all his work. With Mozart this is not so. Nothing in his work points to his possession of that silent pride, that heroism which sustains a man and warns him to keep his troubles to himself.

Popular sentiment to a large extent has accepted Mozart's music purely upon the grounds of his hapless end. It may be mentioned, in passing, that Schubert's "Unfinished" symphony owes not a little of its vogue to the impression that death gave him no time to complete it. It is more likely that in the nine years which Schubert had for considering his work, he was convinced that it was wiser to leave the two movements as they were, with all their introspec-

tion and grasp of big principles, than to hazard a trivial scherzo and a weak finale.

I do not wish to be misunderstood, nor to have it thought that I am closing my eyes to the calamities of Mozart's life, or the tragic circumstances of his death. For I am not criticising the results of his genius but the evidence which his work supplies as regards the organisation of his musical sense. He was as far ahead of Bach in opening the way for the development of musical forms and the treatment of the orchestra as he was behind him in comprehending the vast realities. It is impossible to identify him with the *Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues*, nor did he possess the insight, which was Bach's alone, into those profound mental states which we find in the B minor Mass and the Passion Music.

That is scarcely to be wondered at, for Mozart showed no very wide interest in or comprehension of the matters that lay outside his art. Just as Bach drew upon Biblical themes for his musical texts, the composers of the Latin faith went to the words of the mass and the ritual for theirs, but no deep effort was made to throw light on the meaning—this might have been interpreted as going beyond the bounds prescribed by canonical law—nor was there any great advance to be noted from one stage to another. In this respect Mozart was specially an offender, and even extreme poverty did not justify a composer of

his rank in writing tawdry pot-boilers to Latin words, nor did his mutilations of the text improve the scholarship of those who performed his settings. In modern times such a motet as his *Splendente te Deus* would terminate the career of a fifth-rate composer. Nor did his setting of Schickaneder's *Die Zauberflöte* say much for his literary judgment. That his enthusiasm for Masonry led him into this error is a curious commentary on the present attitude of his church in regard to secret societies. It is not music alone that has changed.

The mental development of Haydn and Mozart, judged by modern standards, was not a high one. Each composer was indifferent to any movement which might transplant him to uncongenial soil. His musical faculty was an entity circumscribed and out of touch with other planes of thought. Each had had a "sound musical education," each began to compose at an early age, and aptitude and facility induced a habit for work which was practised incessantly without any of those breathing-spaces for the study of other matters that widen a man's horizon. It was an artificial age and the music was merely masquerade.

Mozart proceeded along the lines of least resistance; his range, it must be admitted, was limited; his powers oscillated within but a small arc of the immense orbit of man's thought. Almost the same

is to be said of Haydn, and the marvel is that we have not yet reached the centenary of his death.

What, then, are our conclusions at this stage? In technique, in the striving to give continuity to the structure of musical ideas, in the feeling that in the world of sound there was something more than the mere stringing together of tuneful fragments, Haydn and Mozart possessed a constructive faculty more highly developed than that of any of their predecessors. It was, in fact, their function to build the house in order that others might shelter in it and then furnish it according to their needs.

Again, we find that music was as essential to them as it was to Bach. It had become to them a form of language, lacking, however, in its vocabulary those words which could be employed to express subjective ideas. We are unable to ascertain whether some slow movement did not mean to Haydn and Mozart just that commentary on life which so much instrumental music of a later date suggests to us, and perhaps it is as well that we can never know this.

In the architectonic department of music their musical sense had shown marked development. Not content with the arbitrary repetition of one section after another in which the germ was a dance theme (although the minuet still persisted as a form), they invented themes for themselves and took pains to make such repetitions as they employed occur at

intervals with additional matter introduced so as to link up the several parts. In this way a new interest was created, and when the innovation was accepted as sound, it became firmly established. The musical sense was now discovering the correlation of one musical idea with another. In Mozart this was pure instinct. A succession of notes of definite time-value, placed at different points of the scale, and yet with distinct relationship to one another, forms a theme.. But Mozart had a just sense of order, and in his melodic invention he "felt" his series of notes so acutely that they formed part, as it were, of a sentence. What followed to complete the sentence was inevitable. He was possessed of perfect fluidity of musical thought: everything that he wrote was clear. In his orchestral music he found that each of the instruments in the wind-group had its own character, and this he brought into prominence as far as his resolution allowed. The violin family was now firmly established as the chief force to sustain the structure, and as their brilliance and variety of tone as well as their wide range of compass were more effective than the somewhat thin but infinitely expressive timbre of the viol family, the older type gradually yielded pride of place.

The musical sense, in comparison with its developments in later years, was still in a primitive state as regards the expression of musical ideas. It is possible

that in the case of Mozart his thought was too pellucid and abundant to be disturbed in its flow by any obstacles. Possibly, too, if he gave the matter any consideration, he put aside as alien to music just the very qualities which we to-day insist upon as indispensable. Some *laudator temporis acti* may wish us back in the days when there was no unruly element to be met and combated, when Mozartian strains conduced to an effortless sequence of empty thoughts. But it is difficult to conceive a modern composer being successful in excluding from his mind all reference to the influences which surround him. He may be a violent partisan of the school that declines to recognise any significance in music beyond consistency of form and treatment, but he cannot prevent his work from reflecting even in some dim fashion the tendencies of his age. In the early stages of the Viennese school this was not so, for music had not yet come to inhabit the mind which was fed upon experience, and primed with observation, so that it gave forth its thoughts, more intense, more deep, striving to wring from the heart a cry which startled men out of their dreamings and caused them to ask what new force had come among them. Music was still isolated, suffering just as much in its solitude from the dexterous inventiveness of its composers as from their lack of interest in other expressions of man's energy. It cannot be said that

any composer till Berlioz was deeply influenced by any movement outside his art. It was regarded too much from the limited point of view suggested by some personage whose love for music was more than balanced by his self-esteem and his avidity for applause in his assumed rôle as patron of the art.

While, therefore, there is enough of evidence to show that the faculty had advanced to a conception of the terms of music in which there was a definite sequence of correlated ideas, there is practically nothing to show that the musical sense was entering into closer communion with the larger cerebral organism. We cannot find the strong manifestation of the effect of outward circumstance, the education, or the deep experience, which in Beethoven were to be demonstrated so fully. Music, in short, had not yet been raised to its fitting plane in the sphere of man's intellect.

It was Mozart's mission—and we cannot deny Haydn his share as well—to enlarge the outline of music till Beethoven came to enrich it with the glories of his thought. It has become a journalistic commonplace to point to Beethoven's waywardness and eccentricity as "proof" of an impaired nervous system. No view could be more reprehensible. Physically he must have possessed an amazing constitution to have been able to withstand for so many

years the ravages of an inexorable disease which exacts the utmost penalty. The way in which his bodily sufferings reacted upon him show that he must have been endowed not only with heroic fortitude but also with a delicacy of nervous organisation which seemed to interpret, to convert into terms of music, every objective influence. The conditions of his life, never particularly happy, deepened his introspection, and his mind became furrowed with those indelible grooves that are eaten away by the gall and bitterness of experience.

Beethoven was a thinker : there was no matter too trivial to be disregarded ; his mind was honeycombed with myriad compartments, each of them packed with busy inhabitants, ceaselessly at work to transform into sound every obdurate circumstance, every happy event. It was not till he came that music assumed that wider aspect which we accept so unthinkingly to-day. Yet we are as far beyond his musical sense in one direction as we are close to it in another.

Direct heir of all the reforms which Haydn and Mozart had effected, he imbibed all that they could teach him, and in addition projected into his work his own personality. But this, musically speaking, was not determined and unalterable : it was capable of infinite variations : it developed on such marked

lines that we can trace through his music the genealogy of his thought. He was the first composer to thrust upon us a style which is referable to definite periods of his existence. This, in our study, is of immense importance, for it shows that music was growing into something more than a mere accomplishment to be exercised at will without any effort to bring it into close relationship with those tides of thought which have left their impress on the art so emphatically in later years. We see, first of all, the influence of Mozart on Beethoven, but eventually and up to the culminating point we have nothing but the influence of Beethoven on Beethoven, insisted upon almost with a violence that conjures the man from the grave and makes us humble in his presence.

We meet with many a paradox in music, but the greatest of these is Beethoven. Yet in another sense he is the faithful witness that testifieth. For we have a most portentous fact confronting us—namely, that during three-fourths of his period of activity he was almost completely unconscious of the sounds which he was creating. His deafness came upon him when he was twenty-eight years of age, and endured till his death, at the age of fifty-seven, that is, for twenty-nine years. If we reckon his serious work as beginning when he was seventeen, we are not far out of our course if we

say that during forty years of musical life his hearing was perfect only during the first decade.

Putting aside for the moment all the poignancy that this signifies, and considering only the historical records, we find that the man who, by dint of insatiable energy, in an outburst of fury that was sublime, wrenched music from the grips of the formularies and flung into it his indomitable soul—we find that this man's brain was shut off from all outward sounds. None of us will ever live to know nature's purpose in this, but it will all be set forth in good time. Then man will understand, having the necessity for music in his marrow, how it came about that a composer proof to all sound was the first to suggest the relation of music to other mental states.

In the world of music there are many men who class Beethoven with the primitives, who believe that modern music did not arise till after his death ; there are many to whom his symphonies have never made any appeal, too formal in their outline, too artificial in their repetition, too thin in their material, to have the strength to clutch the heart and insist upon an unqualified acceptance. There are also many who look upon his orchestral work as archaic : but in these cases it is not so much the attitude of the *sacristanus hereticus*, grown sceptic from too much familiarity with holy things ; it is the attitude of the

music-lover who protests against the lesser achievements being thrust upon him while the man himself is only to be encountered (if public performances alone permit this) through the painful contortions of some long-haired charlatan. Better than this a thousand times were the automatic spinnings of a machine which enables us to play the pianoforte with our feet instead of with our hands, for then we can go back many times to realise again and again a passage which has the imprint of humanity upon it.

Beleaguered as he was, constraining each remaining sense to take the place of that one of which he was bereft, Beethoven hammered out on the innocent keys of his clavier all his exasperation, his derision, his unfulfilled hopes, his baulked ambition, till the nervous jangle of brassy wire resolved itself into time and tune. Had he lived in a later day, with all the consolation that the mind can profitably steal from interests which only remotely fall within the penumbra of music, "he might have sung as wildly well" his "mortal melody" in some other mode. But his mission was to insist upon the stability of musical thought; it was through his intellect that his successors were to comprehend human strivings in the bigness of their potentialities, and to establish for the edifice of sound a foundation fast and sure, that others might erect upon it their echoing halls and labyrinthine corridors.

The beginnings of his creative work arose from external impressions, but it was only when he was shut off from all actual sound that he became himself. He had a faculty which was predisposed to music. After having absorbed what he had heard of other men's work, he passed it backwards and forwards, shuttlewise, through the loom of his mind, until he found that he could weave a new material by means of the old method. His development advanced to the point where he was able to reconstruct in his brain all the thoughts which others had experienced in order to produce their work. Insensibly his own thought eclipsed theirs till it was strong enough to attain independence. In the bitterness of his exclusion from intimate association with his fellow-men, when his eyes sought in vain to read in their faces something of their utterances, he was driven back upon himself, and in those solitary conferences he found a peace that was his own.

In his case more than in that of any other composer we encounter a strange and, it would seem, perverse law of nature, yet it is one which, when recognised, has probably been of more comfort than any other to those who have found the highway rough, and the passer-by niggard of his greeting. Beethoven no doubt did in his own way get some joy out of life : he must have experienced that supreme vitality which bursts in upon every creative act. There are no terrors at

such a moment: the "blind mouths" cannot steal a fraction of the divine instant when a human being knows that he has brought forth a new thing. One feels sure that Beethoven could not have been denied every one of these moments, so immense in their very brevity. At the same time, when we take the sum of his life, it seems almost insolent, almost cruel, to be glad in the work of a man whose portion was an incessant warfare against fate. Yet this stunted, unruly, pock-marked man whipped his brains into sound, and the scourge fell unsparingly, so that a later generation should listen at ease, with but scant compassion for him who of all men had a right, with angry fist shaken in the empty air, to exclaim, "*Non omnis moriar!*"

But the obscure vision of an uncertain immortality cannot be nature's compensation for obloquy and disappointment, for self-denial and want. There surely must be something more. May we not trust that there is a *spes musica* to encourage composers at their last extremity, and to pledge security for the good estate which those who come after them are to inherit?

CHAPTER XI

THE DEMAND FOR EXPRESSION

We are now at a turning-point in the history of music, and we may look back and survey the ground that we have covered. I have said that music in the case of Bach was essential to the man himself: it was a habit of thought which he practised under the coercion of an irresistible force. Hitherto the world had seen no musical sense so highly organised as his, but it had been approached tentatively and remotely by some of his predecessors. When once it was established as an intellectual process it fell within the arena of the thoughts of others, and became assimilated because their minds had been prepared by the same long process to comprehend and utilise such elements as were essential for their own purpose.

In those who immediately followed Bach, the mechanical side of composition was brought to such a condition of exactness that it was not difficult for a man who was thoroughly grounded in the rules to

piece together some work which should meet the requirements of the grammarians, leaving, however, the higher regions of the faculties unsatisfied.

Thus it is that, in spite of all their accomplishment, we can only regard Haydn and Mozart as trusting more to technique than to that inner view of their art, its scope and possibilities, which in no long space of time were to insist upon recognition. I have said that, although in this respect these composers were not very highly endowed, they carried further the principles of design, and this alone shows that their musical sense evinced a craving for a more adequate and sustained form in which to express their thoughts. Thus the field was made ready for Beethoven, who, though less complete in one department of technical equipment than some of his predecessors, brought his faculty of music into correlation with other mental processes and seemed to be eternally engaged in a titanic struggle to express those strenuous but inarticulate thoughts to which his humanity and experience gave birth.

Schubert, too, although he scarcely suffers from being classed among those who had not a "sound musical education," went further in demonstrating through his music the workings of his imagination. His insight was developed by his essays in lyrical form and by the amount of literature which he must have digested in order to arrive at the true

interpretation of the poems which he set to music. We may not indeed be quite conscious of his influence in this respect until we consider the mass of his work and the mental equipment requisite for producing it. He was overshadowed by his great contemporary, and his larger fame has been entirely posthumous. The complete and due recognition is yet to come.

It is certainly remarkable that in old Vienna there were four composers, all living within one century, in the midst of a society in which music was peculiarly active, and that each, though imitative and influenced by his predecessors to a certain extent, nevertheless remained distinguished by a definite and personal style. The movement of the art of music from the time of Bach had grown to large dimensions: there was an abundance of interpreters and executants, and a larger appreciation on the part of the public.

Beethoven is the point at which the earlier style culminates, the point from which the modern movement starts. Technically this is emphasised, for, as I have said elsewhere, it was not till after his death that the mechanism of some of the orchestral instruments was improved so as to enlarge their range. But development of technique was not all. The composer himself was becoming alive to the intellectual value of his gift; he was experiencing a sense of

responsibility. No longer would he permit himself to be classed with the lackeys; he was sensitive to every slight which was in the faintest way offered to him.

This attitude was at first misunderstood—not unreasonably, it must be confessed. The change had come about so rapidly that it took time—it is taking time—for men to comprehend that music is something more than a stimulus to pleasurable sensations. The composer is not in intellectual accomplishment the child of his own period; he is rather the father of succeeding generations in the world of art. The very knowledge of this, the consciousness of a gift which few of his own time are seriously disposed to consider, has no doubt given rise to many an outburst of contempt, of exasperation on the part of the composer, but his point of view has almost invariably been accepted ultimately. In regard to the character developed by many men of a period later than 1830 there is this always to be remembered, that their talent grew more rapidly than public appreciation, and many a piece of gossip which has been handed down as "evidence" of lamentable want of self-control can be referred to a very natural and most human disposition.

One singular point about the work of the composers of the post-Beethoven epoch is their relatively small output. Music was becoming more

complex ; the extension of harmony compelled a closer attention to minutiæ and it was no longer admissible for the changes to be rung constantly on two chords, tonic and dominant, with the very obvious "filling-in" that could be added quite mechanically. Dreary expanses of padding, trivial scale passages, arpeggios, meaningless reiterations, were being estimated at their true value, and the composer who resorted to their use was at the same time exposing the poverty of his invention. Conscientious endeavour to make every bar interesting exacted labour, and even though the composer had no preoccupations as to the meaning which he desired to convey, he had a sense of congruity in the emotion which his musical thought suggested and this excluded from his work the obvious trickery of older days. He found himself compelled to think—to think hard—and his surroundings and the conditions of life in which he was placed moulded his thought. Music written in these circumstances grew more knit, more highly organised, and entailed a mental effort and concentration which restricted the amount of production. Similarly the orchestra became a very different affair from that which Beethoven had at his command. New instruments were added, new combinations widened the scope for colour, and the pattern became more intricate.

The amount of detail, therefore, that a composer

had to put into his orchestral work was increasing to an enormous extent, and the mere manual labour of composition was not to be treated as lightly as it was in the days of Haydn and Mozart. The thematic material of these composers was comparatively slight, and it can be readily imagined that the effort to turn out work rapidly cost them little, for they had little to think of. Haydn wrote nearly 150 symphonies; Mozart over 40; Beethoven wrote 9, and the last of the classical composers, Brahms, wrote only 4. It would call for some hardihood on the part of a modern composer to announce that he had written a dozen symphonies, for the mental effort and labour requisite for one only are known, and were we to be assured that he had written such a work on modern lines in six weeks, the conclusion would be irresistible that he was smugly complacent as to the value of his material.

After Beethoven's death music was changing to such an extent that the composer had to give to his work a quality totally different from that which at one time might have sufficed. He was becoming more highly educated in every direction and was seeking among those outside his profession for his equals in mental endowment. He found that his interests could be deepened by a comprehension of other arts, even if they did not, as far as he could see, impinge upon his own, and he discovered, further, that the

appreciation, if not the actual practice of them, had an influence which he could not disregard. In the choice of texts which he desired to set to music he became more discriminating ; he exercised his critical judgment to an extent of which his predecessors had been incapable, and in his work he brought to a focus almost automatically the reflex of contemporary thought.

Thus an entirely new aspect of art came into existence after 1830. The reign of the mathematician was over ; there was no longer need for that composer who, without special aptitude, could be so trained in the exercise of rule-of-thumb that he could contrive some kind of music painfully correct, never ugly, but invariably dull. His sovereignty was challenged by a new order of brain.

There were men to whom music made its irresistible appeal after they had had some time to think for themselves. They were not all trained in a musical atmosphere, they did not all inherit something in the way of "good-will" from their near relatives, they were not all complete masters of the technical side of music at fifteen years of age. In some cases they had already been out in the world, and had time to comprehend the risks before entering upon the most relentless of all vocations. Music was exerting her powers over a very different class of intellect, but the evolutionary process was still the same. The art

had been carried to its furthest point in Beethoven, and up to that point a certain stamp of brain was necessary to meet the demands which nature by gentle steps was making. Now, however, that that class of intellect had brought the art to one mature stage of growth, there had to be found, in order to advance the plan of development, a stamp of intellect which was predisposed not to music alone but to other influences as well. The composer, to instance one change, ceased for a time at least almost entirely to be a public performer, and it is only in our own day that he shows signs of resuming the practice of this branch of his art.

It is not necessary to discuss the causes of the Romantic Movement and its subsequent expansion. This wave which moulded the contours of man's thought to such an extent caught music on its flood just at the moment when there was a tendency to perpetuate the vices of formalism. For there was a disposition to declare that Beethoven had uttered "the last word," and any curiosity as to fresh developments was being sternly discountenanced. Hence it was that those who were thinking for themselves were outside the musical pale. It is a paradox that after Beethoven's death the musical faculty should have been transferred to some who in the bookish sense were the least qualified to carry it

further. They would have been rejected in an academic examination on their musical knowledge. But they possessed another kind of knowledge which was quite as valuable as pianistic feats or contrapuntal displays. They educated themselves, and, with all the infallibility of youth, were not backward in proclaiming the superior merits of their system. To their eternal credit they assumed full responsibility for their wild ideas; they showed their faith in themselves by accepting, not, however, quite silently, the asperities and privations of the life they chose. There was something Homeric in their endurance—they wept ; they sulked ; they took every advantage of the weak points of their adversaries and spared them not ; they wielded the mightier weapon with deadly effect ; when wounded they cried out lustily, paused for breath and then came on again ; they had an insatiable thirst for that knowledge which deals with universalities ; they had no small gift of prophecy ; in shaping the destinies of music they foresaw dimly, and probably only half-consciously, some ultimate mental state when mankind would arise to a fuller and clearer understanding of the place of music in relation to the other faculties.

More particularly we have Hector Berlioz, a composer not blessed with "a sound musical education." He was born not too late after the French Revolution

to be impervious to its effects. That upheaval was like a vast conflagration in which the useless lumber and sweepings of a house are burnt to ashes in order to make it more sanitary. But the doors of the cock-pit of Europe were not yet closed and the shutters put up. As a child Berlioz must have picked up some of the jargon of billets and forage; many a time must he have gazed wide-eyed at the dusty squadron whose clatter put an end to all sleepiness for one afternoon, whose jinglings at dawn startled the night-capped bourgeois from his pallet and winked away all rest, filling him with anxiety and misgivings. From this quarter and that came varied reports that defied reconciliation. The trepidations of one night passed with the morning into a state of abiding confidence in the Man of Destiny, till some noon-day alarmist, too conscientious to consider his neighbours' peace of mind, predicted by an elastic reading of many hitherto unverified problems of strategy, that Scythian and Greek, Parthian and Assyrian, were within so many parasangs of the homestead. Chronology and nationality mattered little when some rumour of foe was spread. The scanty hoard behind the panel of the shutter or beneath the loose plank of the knotted floor might be safe for at least another night, but the imagination that had been fed, laggardly and for fear of stripe or imposition, upon the records of

Cæsar, Cornelius Nepos or Xenophon, now found itself disastrously alert to the consequences of minor tactics according to ancient writ.

In this restless age that most restless of all composers, Berlioz, was thinking for himself. He had been inoculated with the fighting spirit. The bulletins of war fed his imagination: with his excitable temperament he went from the actualities of the scene to the large conceptions of men's brains, and created for himself an atmosphere of strange worlds. To criticise his work from the artistic point of view is not our business, but the significance of his mental organisation is deep. He is the first composer that we meet with whose musical sense arose sporadically, and not only was uninfluenced by surroundings, but also declared itself impetuously in spite of hostile conditions. No circumstance could hold it in check or repress it; it overthrew every preconception of the period; it acknowledged no rule. Few opportunities for hearing music presented themselves to Berlioz in his youth. It is improbable that he had heard a note worth listening to till he came to Paris at the age of nineteen. It may appear to some a deplorable fact that his childhood was passed out of ear-shot of those refining influences which, we are assured, a study of the great masters can provide; but they shut their eyes to what Berlioz very likely would have become had he enjoyed these dubious

advantages. He might have been turned into a fifth-rate violinist or a "professor" of music at some girls' school; he certainly would never have become *our* Berlioz.

Susceptible to music, yet completely ignorant of what was being done in the art, he devoted himself to such literature as came within his reach, so that his imagination was trained and his education well advanced before the bigness of music burst upon his ears. His time had been spent in the larger task of developing his intellect, so that when music at last came within his range, he had a mind sufficiently widened to grasp its immensities. Had he been brought up with his fingers constrained reluctantly to the keys of a rickety clavier, or with his immature mind burdened by counterpoint of the fifth or even the fiftieth species, he would have ended his career as a hack. But the gods knew their own business best, and charged this raw youth with a portentous mission.

Although his musical education was not of the kind ever likely to meet with the approval of the authorities, it was the one specially fitted to his nature, and whatever may be said of the erratic character of his music, or of the vagaries of his temperament, he showed, in his *Grand Traité*, that his was a well-ordered mind, that he was accurate and methodical in searching for facts, overlooking not

even the minutest point so that his work should be complete. A man who applied these qualities to one branch of his art was not the one to neglect a full knowledge of every other department of it, and if his ideas were heterodox, if he incessantly castigated the teaching of those whose talents he despised, it was because his conception of music rejected all cut-and-dried procedure as superfluous. His capacity, not only for creating music, but also for accepting resolutely all drudgery in order that he might gain his end, was unique.

When Beethoven died, in 1827, the Choral Symphony had been published only in the preceding year, but three years later, at the age of twenty-seven, Berlioz had written, almost as a school-exercise, his *Symphonie Fantastique*. The difference between the two works was immense. We may put on one side all the deficiencies of the latter work, and consider only what clue it affords to the musical sense of Berlioz. From one point of view he may be regarded as a species of interrupter of the current of musical thought, but it is more probable that he was the transformer. The thin strain of music in his mind was engendered by causes too slight to be traced, but he must have been in a high degree predisposed to music, and all that he could hear in the few years in Paris before he wrote this symphony must have accumulated in a brain astonishingly re-

ceptive, yet so discriminating that it could preserve complete independence. One might have expected to find in his work some traces of Beethoven's manner—he may have persuaded himself that there were passages which reflected the style of the only Master whom he acknowledged, but it is not easy to find them.

From the first to the last Berlioz was always Berlioz, and he is almost the only composer whose music, even in its earliest stages, owes little to the ideas of others. This probably was caused by his having served no arduous apprenticeship in the schools; he had caught none of the jargon that is acquired by a rigid course of study; so he retained and amplified his idiom and his individuality. The tendencies of the age were quickly detected by his alert mind, and he showed them small mercy. He divested his work of every trace which might be construed as indicating an allegiance to principles which he held in derision, and he set to work to evolve a kind of music which should express himself.

Whether we admit his efforts within the sacred circle, or dismiss them as wilful and perverse examples of a heated imagination, no one can deny that when once he had taken up a position he stoutly maintained it against all comers with a wholeheartedness and a sincerity which were infinitely more valuable in fortifying his character than

any contrapuntal affairs were in strengthening his music.

In his conception of sound, Berlioz put in play three agents: the verbal and visual were combined with the auditory, and the last, in any age that the world has seen, would rightly be regarded as abnormal. His power of realising sound in silence must have been colossal, for we know that he was too poor an executant to be able to try over his effects on a piano. Yet his ideas occurred to him at a time when orchestral music was in its infancy, when the suspicion of a discord in a score would have caused a strike among the players more swiftly than a trades-union manifesto does in modern times. He felt the "genius" of the orchestra more potently than anyone who had gone before him, and although he had none of the experience of Beethoven, he showed in his first important work a technical mastery which was almost superhuman. We must remember that when Berlioz produced his *Symphonie Fantastique* he was at an age younger than Beethoven was when he wrote his first Mozartian symphony, and, what is still more remarkable, between these two compositions there was a space of only thirty years.

These points, considered solely from the aspect of cerebral development, to the exclusion of all questions of the artistic value of his work, indicate that in

Berlioz the musical faculty was present to a degree far exceeding in acuity that of his contemporaries. We know that he was altogether impervious to the work that the majority of his predecessors had achieved. Beethoven was enthroned in his mind, and no one else. Slender as was his equipment in one direction, it was ample enough in another to suffice for the needs of more than one generation after him, and the irony is that those who would disparage the man, without placing him in relation to the state of music in his period, are only too ready to bow before him when they discover that what he lacked, if even that was appreciable, was but the lesser part.

As he began, so he continued,—always at fever-heat. Gifted with an imagination which, though primarily devoted to music, conceived strange events and curious conversations, he rushed through life with impetuous energy. He seemed to revel in lime-light, and, when there was no one near to flood him with its rays, he had no hesitation about turning it on with his own hand. In the history of man's achievements, sculpture, painting, and music supply us with three types, who, diverse as their interests were, were past masters in the use of one variety of the *arme blanche*—the goose-quill. It has become the fashion to attribute to Berlioz certain of his characteristics because he was a Frenchman. No

view could be less intelligent. Cellini, Whistler, and Berlioz belong to all countries and to all time. Each strove against the obtuseness which enslaved his contemporaries; each saw that convention was merely transient and arbitrary and a frail obstacle to the march of the human faculties; and, irrespective of the artistic permanence of their work, they will live by their aims just as much as by the special gifts which exalted them above their fellows.

Over Berlioz many a scholastic tear has been shed, but we need not add our own. On the contrary, we have good cause to rejoice that we have inherited so much. If there is a place for regret, it is only that he was not led to make a complete study of the human body, for that would have taught him more of composition as a principle than any Lesueur across the river could have imparted in a musical sense. The few paces from the corner where the old École de Médecine stands to the bookstalls in the Place de l'Odéon, or in the other direction down the Boul' Mich', to the Quai where one picks up the well-thumbed copper-plate editions of this most isolated master's works—these paces seem always haunted by an indomitable spirit whose place in the art will only be determined by a kind of music which has still to be written.

"Pax" Berlioz never knew; he had to die to win his benison, "in pace."

In a survey of this period it is unnecessary to consider specially every composer, but only those who established a new aspect of the art by reason of their exceptional mental endowment. Wagner is a supreme example of the acuteness of the musical sense, which not only attained a high development in him but also led to a corresponding but by no means equal development in others.

It has become the fashion to regard him as an interesting "case." Even during his lifetime there appeared a "Psychiatrische Studie" which must have given him some amusement, while many of his partisans must have itched to apply the horse-whip to the "Spezialist der Psychiatrie" who offered them his smug sympathy for their mental aberration in supporting so crazy a person. I will not deny that Wagner himself gave the alienist every assistance in his power—he was too thorough to overlook even this small matter—but although his musical development is part only of the larger subject, we must confine ourselves to those points which bear upon our inquiry.

At the beginning of his career Wagner showed much less individuality than Berlioz. Born only seven years after his great French contemporary, his musical sense developed late, for while Berlioz at the age of twenty-seven had written his *Symphonie Fantastique*, Wagner, at twenty-seven, had just got

as far as the *Faust Overture*, and it was not until fourteen years later that he had made up his mind (musically speaking) as far as we can follow it in *Das Rheingold*.

It is not inappropriate at this point to refer to the question of the period when mental development may arise. The verdict of the world has been in the past too summary to be altogether just. Age in everything is purely relative. Verdi, when he wrote his *Falstaff*, was a mere lad of fourscore years. Many a modern composer is too much of a centenarian at twenty. It is difficult to reconcile these facts, and the rule-of-thumb reckoning of a man's age by years is frequently grossly unfair. In the first decades of a man's life physical and mental development may be so rapid as to cause anxiety ; it may be so slow as to give rise to the idea that the individual will never accomplish anything, and in such a case ignorance and impatience may inflict injuries which time cannot efface. There are instances in which development remains stationary for a time, and this is true as much of the backward boy as of his brilliant companion, who may exhaust so much of his forces in winning prizes that he has no energy in reserve after he leaves the university. The idea seldom presents itself that the less accomplished or even the less diligent lad may be storing up power which at a later time he will expend cautiously and

thriftily, guided not by his own acumen but by some protective law of nature.

"Man also knoweth not his time" is singularly true in this connection, and particularly in the case of Russian composers of our own generation has it happened that those who have left their impress,—perhaps a transient one,—upon the music of their day, have in a large number of instances been men who discovered their vocation and began their schooling when others of their adopted calling had already advanced towards independence. It is as though nature deferred the bestowal of her gift until those whom she favoured had reached an age when they fully comprehended its value.

The beginning of the twentieth century has seen something of a reaction, and there has been a disposition to worship youth without any thought of the processes which have come into force to render this acceptance possible. I do not propose here to discuss the psychology of the interpretative side of music, nor need I indicate the conclusions at which I have arrived. The creative side of music is of the first importance to us, and we have to explain it (as far as any cerebral act can be explained) from the examples which we have before us.

Wagner's faculty for music, as I have said, was developed late. I will not attempt to define what is called "genius," but, if he possessed that mysterious

endowment, there was no indication of its existence till he had passed the age at which several composers as world-renowned as himself had closed for ever their careers. His musical faculty at the beginning was so limited that, were a catastrophe to wipe out all traces of, and references to, his later work, it would be an amazingly gullible posterity that would accept, on the evidence of *Die Feen*, its composer as exceptionally gifted. Wagner was nearly forty years of age before he "found himself," and in the development of his musical sense we find summed up the ripe conclusions of three or four generations. Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Meyerbeer, all suggested to him the means of distinction. The dramatic conceptions of others aroused an enthusiasm never sufficiently strong to last. First it was one composer, then another; he was feeling his way through men's brains, and the experience was invaluable, in order that his mind should be drained of all influence, that he should essay all styles until he discovered one adapted to his temperament and mode of thought. It was as if the soil of his intellect had been brought back by a process of rotation to its virgin state. When he found that the conventional formulæ of harmony could be extended, his musical thought began to acquire an idiom of its own, both individual and characteristic enough to be identified with him and with no other, but it was

only when he had lighted upon a progression of four ascending semitones that he charted the troubled seas of his endeavour. There is something grotesquely incongruous in the notion that these notes may have resulted from a wild improvisation on a lodging-house piano in that terrain of London known as Regent's Park.

Wagner's late development was no disadvantage, for it brought experience. Adversity in his case, as in that of many others, was not so bad a school after all. The divine ictus that fell upon him struck into him a supreme belief in himself. He was from the outset inexorable in his conditions. Frequenting the stage doors as a lad he caught some of that strange fervour which causes so many to expend months and years for a "brief hour." His mind was made up to be great and he became great. His faith in himself survived the wreckage of hopes and ambitions; to him an obstacle was an incomprehensible thing, and he never knew when he was beaten.

From the composers who had gone before him he inherited subjectively some of their musical faculty; without any justification for the proceeding he assumed the mantles of other prophets, with occasionally disconcerting results, and it was only when he had cut a garment suitable to his own needs that he found the chariot of fire at hand. But in his "Ritt" to higher spheres his own Loge was on his trail to

see that the mantle was burnt to ashes. So also has it been with Palestrina, with Bach, with Beethoven. No cloak has been left behind to be patched, but its dust has gone to fertilise the goodly earth.

Wagner's individuality either as a composer or as a man was so strong that he seemed to absorb and concentrate in himself all the musical activity of his age. His contemporaries may have cultivated their own idiom in a possibly less electric atmosphere, but while their work may have a definite æsthetical value, we are not concerned with it unless it shows the presence of marked cerebral development. It may be Wagner's destiny to enjoy only a brief spell of popular favour, but no man since Beethoven has exerted so wide an influence over the art, and there is no composer worthy of consideration who does not owe much to him. More than any one else he led to a study and appreciation of music among a class which had hitherto been impervious to its sway, and countless numbers have had their musical sense developed by him. It further is the case that in Wagner we have the unique instance of a composer whose music is now accepted without cavil, while it is the texts of his works which still provide ample grounds for argument. The "ethical significance" of *The Ring*, for example, the text of which was published privately in 1853, has been, and is still being, discussed from every conceivable point of view.

The æsthetical speculations which his work raises do not concern us. It may be admitted that there are portions in each of his music dramas whose necessity does not appear quite obvious. But they must have been of importance else Wagner would not have preserved them. Their interest, musically speaking, is trivial, and they seem to be dragged in in order to support some side-issue of that philosophy of his which he tortured so ruthlessly.

No composer of our own or of any age aspired to be so many-sided, and in the multifarious questions which he insisted on making his own, he was bound to raise antagonisms. But no reformer of his stamp can avoid pricking some one's susceptibilities, and there is this to be said, on the other hand, that he had the genius for commanding friendship, he had many of the finer qualities of a great leader and some of those less enviable ones which sacrifice the feelings of others in order to maintain a righteous cause. He demanded much of his friends, as much for his concrete needs as they gave him of their patience and loyalty. Every one who came in contact with him, who was associated with him, eventually won fame. Scoffed at and derided, the butt of every caricaturist who leapt for joy at his chance, Wagner lived down all opposition, and the obloquy that was flung at him he left for the scavengers to cart away.

Consistency was not his forte ; it is only the fissi-

parous amœba, destitute of a trace of nervous system, that shows consistency from first to last. Illogical he was, preaching one doctrine of art and refuting it by his practices. His long-windedness is represented in many portentous tomes, but we have to remember that Wagner was a German. That which stood for his mother-speech was to him a kind of music; he was carried away by the volume of guttural, of consonant and of vowel, by the joy of contriving octo- and deca-syllabics which warmed his soul. He wrote, as he scored, with a wealth of colour and sonority; he orchestrated the German language so that it was a fitting mate for the glory of those musical sounds in which he bathed himself. The timbre of a sentence seemed to present itself to him before he wrote it; it was as if the assonance of the words took shape in his mind before the words themselves. Sound was so identified with thought in his conceptions that he heard the reverberation of a line before he resolved it into concrete form, and there is a closer connection between his music and his German than is generally supposed. For his German, like his music, is unique. The ordinary speech was not rich enough for his purposes, so he set himself to excavate from the ruins of the past petrified lumps, vast consonantal conglomerations, and these matched admirably the accretions which enlarged the Nibelung myth to the dimensions of an everyday fact.

What Berlioz had done in a lesser degree, with, however, more respect for his native tongue, Wagner proceeded to do on a vast scale. Each, by providing his own texts, showed that in his mind verbal expression was exactly matched by music, and we know, in Wagner's case, that, except in very rare instances, he set his texts unaltered. This dual faculty was in marked contrast with the limited literary attainments or judgment possessed by the older composers. It indicated the combination of the literary with the musical faculty, a command of two modes of vigorous expression ; it demonstrated, further, an intimate fusion of the verbal thought with the musical idea. This is not to be taken as asserting that the verbal thought preceded the musical conception, or that the music was determined entirely by the words, for in Wagner's work many of the strongest moments occur at places where the curtain is down, or where it well might be down for all that is being done on the stage.

This combination of verbal with musical idea was so strong in Wagner's mind that it is highly probable that he was often unable to say which came first.

The text and music of a lyric may occur simultaneously in the mind, and they may arise actually in the midst of noting the text and music of another lyric with which they have no connection. In other words, one cerebral process of a dual character

may be interrupted by a process of a similar kind, so that it may be said that four processes are in action at one moment in the brain.

In Wagner's work there was no room for after-thoughts: he began it, continued and ended it as though he was able to "visualise" it in an instant as a complete achievement. He saw his subject largely, and at the same time he could give close attention to details, and he was able to perceive his music definitely in the construction of his text.

Whatever may be the judgment of posterity in regard to the artistic value of his work, we can appreciate the vastness of his mental projection. Even at the outset of his career, while he was still hampered with the ideas of others, he could not escape from his own individuality. Small as it at first was, it increased with the development of his musical sense till it was able to exclude every style but his own. Through him and Berlioz the musical faculty had been brought to a higher degree of sensitiveness than was experienced by any of their predecessors, and they possessed, further, the power of exercising it in connection with the literary faculty. In this there was a consciousness that no matter how distant the time might be for the reconciliation of musical with verbal thought, a fuller comprehension of the art was inevitable. Whether in this they were prophetic, or only

indulging in a theory which favoured their attitude towards their art, no man can say. But it is unquestionable that in them the sense of music had entered into a larger possession.[1]

[1] Those who seek in Wagner for a sign of mental or physical impairment would be wise to consider their grounds. He was 56 years of age when his eldest child was born ; after a strenuous fight which well might have exhausted the energies of half-a-dozen, he compelled the world to recognise him, and beginning his crowning work at the age of 66, he produced, at 70, *Parsifal*, a work whose teaching many regard in the light of a fifth Gospel.

CHAPTER XII

PRESENT CONDITIONS

Since the passing of Wagner we seem to be confronted with a new aspect of music, but the history of the art warns us to be on our guard against assigning too definite limits to any stage in its progress. For a mode of musical thought which a more staid contemporary opinion regarded as violent and revolutionary has eventually come to be considered as an advance so gentle and imperceptible that a later generation may well wonder why it ever caused a stir. We are at this moment experiencing the difficulties which others in the past encountered in attempting to determine what position would ultimately be occupied by the extremest phase that music had shown in their day. At every epoch the most advanced form of musical thought must give rise to some apprehensions, but, if the past is to be our guide, we would be wise to avoid hasty conclusions. Music is always in a state of transition, and it is as

impossible to direct the course of man's mental faculties as it is to foresee whither they are tending. We are, however, conscious that, whether the present condition of music is born of perversity, or is merely the prelude to future developments, we are witnessing a stage of the art which we cannot disregard. From the point of view of æsthetics we encounter complicated problems, but these we may set on one side, for we are not occupied with them here. If we are right in our view that the sense for music is a recent cerebral development, we have ample material to show that the brain is able now to give forth a conception of sound which at no period in music has been investigated. Though this expression of music may seem unjustifiable to some, and may indicate to others a deplorable retrogression, a comparison of its results with past achievements, considered solely from the aspect of mental progress, presents several suggestive points.

I have laid stress in the preceding pages upon man's faculty for giving forth his ideas by means of the orchestra, and my reason for this is clear. For it is in this medium that the musical sense is found at its supreme development. The power of analysing mentally a large number of timbres, of selecting appropriate combinations, must be highly organised or the result will be intolerable. At the same time the composer has at his command a large number of

"voices" (as we may term the various instruments) each possessing a character of its own—the *personæ*, as it were, who have their exits and their entrances in the drama which he unfolds. In his construction, in his orchestral thought, he must see to it that there is a perfect balance between the musical content and the treatment. In older days, when construction was strictly formal, this treatment was so obvious that, given an arrangement for pianoforte of some orchestral work, any half-dozen composers would have scored it for orchestra so that the effect to the ear was in each case similar. But to-day this cannot happen, for construction has been carried to a point where the formal lines cease, and the musical thought is influenced and determined to a very great extent by the mode in which the composer's orchestral sense asserts itself.

In a former chapter I spoke of the mechanical improvements in certain instruments of the wood-wind group which were effected after Beethoven's death. These instruments, by some curious law of "selection," became regular constituents of the orchestra, and have not been superseded. But while their tenure is secure, it is probable that when the other wood-wind instruments, which we at present regard as obsolete, are studied with a view to corresponding modifications of their mechanism, they, too, will be found to be indispensable, and the several

members of the wood-wind group will be as complete as the strings are now.

Reference has been made to the limitations of the horns, but when a piece of mechanism consisting of a valve attachment was applied to them and to the trumpets, the work that they had to perform became completely changed, and, instead of playing meaningless notes in order to fill in a chord, they became possessed of a compass and flexibility which gave them complete independence of action in the orchestra and raised them to the status held by the other wind instruments. It may be too much to assert that this modification changed the entire aspect of music, but it certainly gave the composer a new power. For in place of melodic outline, accompaniment and bass, which had done service, he was able to construct his work of many melodies, interwoven so as to constitute one impalpable web of sound, yet individually so characteristic that each thread could be identified.

This extension of the structure of music and the increase of the component parts introduced a new element, for, instead of only one mental conception being present to the composer, there were many, and these gradually detached themselves from the arbitrary technique of composition, till at length they established in his mind a relation, vague though it might be, to other more definite forms of thought. In other words, the composer

became aware that he experienced emotion through his work, and deliberately applied himself to cultivate it.

We now reach a point at which the composer discovered that the expressive side of music demanded some concessions from the constructive side; he recognised that the orderly rotation of theme by rule, and the traditional methods of expansion of the fabric with the return to the original statement, were not sufficient. In the conventional forms the procedure was apt to create a vicious circle, and therefore in order to dispense with the slavish adherence to a style of treatment, which, when reduced to its bare elements, was almost invariably the same, he saw that he must increase the possibilities of his themes. In the elaboration of his material he broke away from bald reiteration; he invested his themes with fresh interest; as they arose, he saw that by stating them separately at first, and then in combination, he could keep the attention on the alert, and from the beginnings of his work pass from one musical phase to another with a corresponding quickening of utterance.

Throughout this process we see the composer striving to express by his art emotions which evade him the moment he attempts to put them into words. It is this elusiveness in music that many find so absorbing, and, although we may feel that some

of it expresses exactly the emotion which the composer intended it to convey, we have not yet reached the stage when the mind can be easily persuaded to accept all music as equally true and sincere. Yet it would be foolish to dogmatise that the effort must fail because it has admittedly failed in many an instance. We are only on the threshold, and those who bar the way forget that the movement of music has behind it one invincible ally, namely, Time. Therefore in this young and green art, which in the history of man is scarcely in its teens, it would be absurd were anyone to take upon himself the duty of guide, since the march of the faculty for music has as yet known no check.

From what has been said it will be apparent that the constructive side of music has been evolved step by step, without any sudden leap forward, while in the effort to elaborate its emotional side, the purely formal lines have been found inadequate. A new aspect of creative work has thus been presented, and it is one which calls for a higher development of the music sense than any that can be traced in the past.

It is true that attempts have been made to stem the strong current of thought which has now set in the direction of expression, but despite all the temporary influence which the opponents of this tendency can wield, despite their struggles to enforce

principles which would thwart all mental development, at the utmost they will only succeed in founding an archaistic school of music.

For while there are those who seek for a wider aspect of music by developing the expressive side, there are others, fettered by the conventionalities of form, in whose incapacity to extend the boundaries of the art in any direction whatsoever is found the true explanation of their negative attitude. It is a conspicuous fact that those who still take refuge behind a scholastic formula do so for fear of exposing the nakedness of their ideas, and, as one would readily expect, they are just the men whose music is devoid of the faintest suspicion of emotional quality. Conscious of the emptiness of their themes, they set themselves to exalt the commonplace by pointing out the marvellous architecture of their work. But while they raise an imposing "elevation," it is found that the mansion is uninhabitable—they have left out the staircase. They rely, we are told, upon beauty of design, upon symmetry of form. Let us consider this for a moment. Outside the ranks of those who have had some musical training, it may be asked how many there are who, on hearing a work for the first time, have their musical sense so acute that they can memorise the themes as they occur, who can recognise the transformations that they undergo, who are able to visualise, as it were, an entire movement in an

instant, and condense it by an effort of concentration so that they can appreciate all the elements of structure, of decoration, and the relation of important parts to the connecting sections? If they can do this in a work which depends solely upon perfection of form, which is supposed to be far beyond any verbal explanation of its purpose, why is it that they confess themselves unable to follow or to understand a work in which every stage is referable to a definite idea? These questions may be put without any leanings to one side or the other, and the only answer is that there are individuals whose comprehension exists on so lofty a plane that the simplest matters in music are beyond them. They, further, would persuade us that they are of the elect because they belaud for its "ethical significance" work which has no significance whatsoever, ethical or otherwise.

There is no man living who can speak of the ethical significance of music: nay, not even his children's grandchildren will have the faculty to do so. It has become the shallow excuse for pretensions to "culture" to use the expression regardless of its meaning. It has been employed in England with rather pitiful grovellings at the feet of a foreign school, not so much to exalt it as to disparage a form of thought which, its detractors confess, is far beyond them. Whatever point of view we may take, modern tendencies are a thousand times more alive than the

maudlin, schoolgirlish sentimentality, which gushes over a sterility of idea, and presses drab treatises to its flat bosom.

For the new phase of music is seeking new outlets; it is not content with the old narrow limits, and no one can arrive at the "ethical significance" of any kind of music until all that we to-day call music has been swept out of existence. We are only paving the way: we are at the stage of the cave-dweller with his tusk of ivory scratched with his flint. When sound has been resolved into terms which, with our ever progressing cerebral development, will convey a definite impression to the brain, and when *that* kind of music has entered into close and intimate association with reason,—when, ages hence, this occurs, it will be time enough to talk of the ethical significance of music.

A moment ago I spoke of the elusiveness of music, and it is not a little singular that a school devoted to cultivating this quality should have sprung directly from the school which identified definite themes with definite emotions. In this there is no swing of the pendulum back to an older condition of things: it is a swing forward. The composer having realised in his mind his emotional idea, and being intent on making it complete by means of music, is so conscious of the insufficiency of his art, that what he does permit us to hear is scarcely the echo of a larger mass of thought

that reaches us only after a conflict in which but a torn remnant is allowed to escape. We feel that the ample content is there although its meaning evades us. Even its intricacy does not leave a sense of disappointment that we cannot grasp it. With all its elusiveness we have the presentiment that, distant as its meaning may be, we are nevertheless closer in touch with it, as applied to some deep fact in nature far beyond our reach, than we are with the painfully obvious truisms that have served their time.

More in our own day than at any period in the past, composers are showing an effort to reach beyond the veil which separates music from the other mental processes. The man who is true to himself must, at every turn, inquire why it is that in the long expanses of musical thought, whether they are of his own creation or are borne upon him by others, there always remains the indefinable atmosphere of a specific mental act which seems so near, and yet so remote from all verbal interpretation.

We are being carried away from the mere grammar of the thing. There is no known mental process which in any respect resembles music. We can instance no parallels, no analogies, until the human brain is furnished universally with the faculty to read, if not the power to comprehend, music.

But the cerebral development goes on, and in time to come, when music has become a "vulgar

tongue," the true poet—the makar, as they used to say in the old Scots language—will arise.

Music is the mother-tongue to very few, and they must undergo, if we would believe the pedants, an exacting course of study in order to master the elements of their business. But if poetry were a mere matter of sixty years old in the thousands of centuries of man's history, we should have every minor poet going through a course of writing and spelling and grammar (by no means superfluous even at this hour); we should have him imitating Spenserian stanzas, while we should have the "critic" taught, as some still need to be taught, that there are fourteen lines, and no more, in a sonnet.

Every test which brings music, as we understand it at present, into relation or parallelism with the other expressions of man's higher faculties must break down. At every stage of its evolution, but particularly after the creative act had begun to assert itself, we find a desire, whether consciously expressed or not, to enter into communion with the other branches of thought. What this composer or that said about his art is of much less importance to us than what he said *in* his art. There are composers whose powers of expression were inadequate, who gave forth their immature thoughts with too supple a confidence, and they may go down to posterity with many a "critical" gibe. But insufficient as their

attempts were to satisfy the purist who reduces all music to one unimaginative standard, they indicate to us cerebral processes of the utmost importance, and it may be that those very men, whose artistic endeavour stands as undeveloped in the superior estimation, will rank high in regard to their mental state. What they tried to express will make amends for the flaws in what they did express.

It is constantly being forced upon us that music is a form of thought, but in spite of this there are men who insist that the composer must think only in one way, in accordance with some specification. Such a teaching will not carry us very far. Even in its highest manifestations it can only result in a concession to critical prejudice or a surrender of principles for some temporary reward. For musical thought ought to be too strong to tolerate limitations, and in so young an art there has been no time for authority to erect a standard beyond all appeal. The composer conceives his idea in silence, but we are told that he must express it in terms of a written law which has not yet been subjected to the supreme test of time. It is not permitted to him to present to us what he hears with the "ear of the mind": he is to reject every impression which cannot be brought within the penumbra of a strait-laced school. No allowance is to be made for expansion.

Music is only "music" when it conforms to prescribed conditions.

An excessive amount of attention is being paid to what has been done in music, without much heed as to what is yet to do. No doubt the educational question confronts us to-day as it did in the fourteenth century, but, now as then, it is based upon an assumption that the faculty for music is fixed and that it has ceased to develop. In this there is a curious inconsistency. If we are referred to Brahms, to Beethoven, to Bach, why not to Willaert, to Josquin des Près, to Dufay? What is it that makes the oldest school obsolete? Is it not just that which will make the later school obsolete in a very short time? If it is admitted that music has advanced, it ought *pari passu* to be acknowledged that man's cerebral capacity for music has enlarged, and the day is bound to come when Mozart's work will be as interesting an archæological specimen as that of Busnois is now.

There is something to be said for human nature, and it is at least comprehensible why a certain order of thought should desire to blot out every aspect of an art which it cannot grasp. For this is an ancient saying. In this way nature may be utilising the wholly stupid people, placing them as stumbling-blocks in the path of the adventurous pilgrim, so that he may be spurred on to make fresh efforts,

and by opposing end them. So every composer whose name remains with us ended the forgotten scholastics who thought to solve, each in his hopelessly futile fashion, the riddle of the brain.

At the present moment, more than at any past stage of music, we need all the stability that we can command, and, if history is to be our guide, we would be wise to guard ourselves against any expression which would ascribe finality to the art.

The modern movement may well appear to a certain class of mind as a highly elaborate form of blasphemy, but in spite of this we have to consider it as the outcome of the human brain. The writing of music is not a haphazard affair. Every part of the structure has to be considered with the utmost care: even those parts which will not be heard in the mass of sound have to be thought out as accurately as those which will be prominent. The dynamics have to be calculated with such precision that the components of the volume of sound shall coalesce without roughness. The thought in the composer's brain, vague and incoherent as it must sound at first to those whose faculty is less highly organised than his, must be analysed to the bare framework of its structure before a note can be written. The sound which he hears in silence sweeps

through his brain in long unbroken masses, but the means for instantaneously writing down his thought is imperfect: he can "think" an entire movement in ten minutes, but it may occupy weeks to put it in such a shape that it can be communicated to others. So great are the obstacles to the recording of impressions that what does reach permanency can be but a fraction of his thought, and in the quiet study of his ideas it must happen that what is preserved is merely the reflex of a profounder thought which cannot be reconciled with any known method of noting it.

If the composer chose to fall back upon the stale devices which others use to conceal their poverty of thought, not to amplify it, he could invent something which would pass muster, but it would be something which was not himself.

Musical notation is at best but a makeshift. The musical thought in the most highly organised brain defies all notation. In past time, except in the case of those whose musical faculty had insisted on some means for retaining as far as possible the conception as it presented itself, it was the fashion to compel the thought to submit to arbitrary rules, and to reject all else that could not be analysed in terms of them. Now, however, the mental process is being reversed. The limitations of notation and of the instrumental means for expression are being felt as

an irksome restraint, and musical thought is being developed so as to disregard the ways for uttering it which convention has prescribed.

All man's endeavours can be traced to nature, and nature is not symmetrical. As far as the eye can see, there is no such thing as a line defining a contour. So will it be in sound. It has been necessary to shape the lines of melody only to obliterate them when they have served their purpose in the design. We are reaching a stage in which musical thought is being presented to the listener in nearly the same form as it arose in the brain of the composer, and the composer is becoming less disposed to recognise the scruples of others by winnowing his material in order that it may find acceptance with a mental organisation lower than his own. What he is attempting is to extend the confines of his thought; he is not resting in complacent self-satisfaction that with an older technique at his fingers' ends he can produce a style of music which, to use a mordant phrase, is "as dead as Donizetti, or deader." Formal construction and design are admirable and appropriate for a style of expression which is the filtrate of musical thought, for the thought has to be modified to suit them. What has yet to be discovered is a new kind of design moulded to the exigencies of the new mode of

thought. For no man putteth new wine into old bottles.

It may be easy enough from the point of view of æsthetics to dismiss much modern music as sheer extravagance, but this evades the question. For in order to contrive even eccentricities of sound there must be a very high specialisation of mental audition and analysis, combined with a knowledge of technique which has never before been displayed to the world. The composer has to take account of innumerable qualities of sound which change at every instant—qualities which are not all summoned for the purpose of mere noise, and these are in geometric progression to those which even fifty years ago were at the command of the composer.

It is one of the many puerilities of modern criticism to estimate the composer, after one solitary hearing of his work, and invariably to his disparagement, by the cubic capacity of his brass or by the area of drum-head surface which he employs. Those who find in such matters an opportunity for their cheap pleasantries are unconsciously revealing to us the shallowness of their capacities, and it is nothing of a task to take their measure. Ridicule is only effective when it is used in defence of established principles, but there is nothing of the kind established in music except what the scholastics would

have us accept. But every stage of the art shows the progress of the musical sense, and to insist upon any fixity now is to impose upon a human faculty restrictions which are grotesque and inept in the light of intellectual development. That which was incoherent to one generation is merely the babble of childhood to another, and so, in spite of the "official" verdict, we may, with the sober lesson of history confronting us, hesitate before we presume with an opinion as to what is right or wrong in music.

Much as a composer may dislike modern tendencies, he cannot, by a display of wit on some academic occasion, set back the march of intellect, and prejudice offers but a feeble resistance to a movement which no man living can check.

At every crisis in the art we are struck by the lack of imagination in those who would resent the imputation that they could not see further than their own narrow accomplishment. I spoke of the complacent way in which the Papacy dogmatised in regard to the phenomena of nature. The evil is that we have in modern times not one Pope but a whole College of them, and their proceedings are made the more ludicrous by the fact that they advance their own special dogmatic theology in order to thwart what is, by a law of nature, beyond their control.

One school deplores the passing of the older

style of "melody," another censures the employment of rich, ever-varying tone-colour, yet another finds little interest in a work which is all emotion and devoid of counterpoint—which does not conform with the well-worn sonata standard. But melody, tone-colour, emotion, counterpoint, construction, are merely relative terms of whose permanence in the musical vocabulary we are by no means assured. In music the only universality is the harmonic chord: all else lies in the course of development. This strange faculty which, after long centuries of silence, man is able at last to put into action, is no thin echo of a reverberant past: it is a mighty sound which, by an inexplicable inversion, has caught tiny quiverings in some hollow, and has amplified them by repercussion, till they are swept up into a mighty roar, unbridled and unstemmed, for man's encouragement.

It is easy to lay down the laws, to exhort the weak, to chastise the transgressor: but no man having a sense of his powers and limitations can blind himself to the fact that all his efforts must go down without a bidding prayer, without a knell, because in the bright purpose of nature what he is seeking must in his short life remain unfound.

Those who stand on the threshold of this art are gazing into the dark, but the dower-chambers are within. Not in their day, nor for many a generation

will men see what these chambers contain for them. But in time to come this musical faculty, so incomprehensible to us, will be erected into a force in man's existence of a potency far beyond all foreshadowing.

CHAPTER XIII

HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT

In studying the evolution of the musical sense some reference must be made to heredity. A number of misconceptions have arisen owing to the confusion which exists in non-musical minds between the constructive act of the composer and the interpretative act of the executant. It is true that some performers have been composers as well, not, however, exercising their creative faculty so decisively as to entitle them to a place in the foremost rank, but examples of composers of the highest distinction who have excelled as executants are extremely rare. The reasons why I have hitherto dealt with the composer alone are obvious, for I have been considering the results of the musical faculty. But we now reach a point at which we have to see whether we can trace the causes of this faculty in individual cases.

In all the arts, but more particularly in music, the attempt is constantly being made to bring forward

evidence of heredity. This probably is owing to the special instance of the Bach family, which I will refer to presently; probably also to the strange mystery which surrounds the creation of music. It is difficult for the musical biographer to resist the temptation of making a hero or a martyr of his "subject." Trivial though the incidents of his life may be, they are apt to be magnified into events of far-reaching importance. There is generally to be found some intimate discussion of personality and character, which, in the guise of "psychological analysis," not infrequently ends in a chaos of pseudo-philosophic jargon. One man may leave us only his letters, another may have a Boswell and a Bowdler rolled into one to extol the virtues and skilfully to obscure the faults—those very faults which might have explained so much. Few composers have escaped the enmity of their contemporaries; some have richly deserved it; others have courted it, and the discretion of the biographer is often strained to justify or to palliate conduct which may have had more to do with the composer's life-work than we care to admit, or ever can know. Clinical histories, too, are set forth with so dazzling a confidence, and the graver facts of medical science are handled with so serene an audacity, that we remember with relief that the personages to whom they refer are already dead.

The instant heredity is mentioned, no parvenu in

search of a pedigree could be more assiduous than the biographer, who seems able to lay his hands on the fitting events and family traits, just as the genealogist brings into the field at a moment's notice squadrons of mailed ancestors waiting to be claimed.

In music the title is often spurious, and what is called heredity, in many cases is not heredity at all. No great account is taken of the special circumstances which may determine a man's career. Environment, caste, tradition, all may result in what I call "continuity of vocation," and this may occur irrespective of any direct transmission from parent to offspring. The old apprenticeship system was an excellent example of continuity of vocation, passed on from master to *employé*, not necessarily from father to son. It has been displaced by the doctrine that the labourer is worthy of a good deal more than his hire, but it is needless to point out that no one as yet has seen fit to apply it to music, at least as far as the composer is concerned.

In "caste" professions the continuity of vocation is found to a marked extent, and is accepted as a matter of course. The son of a soldier, for instance, who follows in his father's footsteps, enters a graded profession. He cannot rise to a high position in one step by exceptional ability; he does so automatically by means of a system which, however,

may shelve him before the opportunity has arrived for testing his capabilities. As a lad he sees the sentry saluting his father; he hears everyone addressing him as "Sir"—that goodly word of civility which modern ideas of equality suppress because it is supposed to smack of servility. The lad absorbs those lesser matters which are in his eyes of the utmost importance—the uniform changed for field-work or for occasions of state, the regularity of routine, the marking off of every hour for its set purpose. His father may be abroad on foreign service, returning with another inch of ribbon on his tunic, perhaps with an empty sleeve. Pictures of his forebears impress upon his receptive mind the pride of race, and he learns the special vocabulary of his father's trade. But he cannot drift into it without some preparation, so he goes to a public school, where he learns not only discipline but also how to command. Woolwich or Sandhurst is yet another step crowded with all the usages of tradition. He receives his commission and popularly speaking inherits his father's profession. But what has led to this has been not only the prestige of his vocation, but also an environment in which he has learnt, almost without knowing it, a special code for use in his work and in his life. Now remove the lad at an early age from surroundings which indicate at every turn a definite calling, put him out to

nurse with a collier's wife and leave him till his seventeenth year. Heredity may appear in him in the combative spirit, but he is more likely to become a labour agitator than a soldier. Of love of country, of patriotism, of the willingness to sacrifice himself for a national cause, be it right or wrong, he inherits nothing.

This continuity of vocation, again, were we to examine all the circumstances of a given case, might be found to be the result of a studious cultivation. British history can supply numerous examples of "dynasties" created by men who followed their fathers' calling because of the "good-will" connected with the name. When this was perpetuated through three or four generations, and aided by a spirit of family clique and a methodical system of log-rolling, a cult was established of one particular profession into which the cadets passed, whether they were qualified for it or not. The calling thus became associated with the name, and, especially in public life, it became "correct" that certain families should always be represented. In such posts, however, so much of the work is carried out by subordinates or permanent officials that the figure-heads have little executive power or scope for initiative, and there is always some court of appeal in the background. These cases occur in vocations in which there is leisure for thinking over a course of action; rarely

does a state of affairs arise involving momentous issues when a prompt decision has to be made without an instant's delay. The work is so much of routine that it would not be easy to go off the rails, and the blunderer is so adroitly guided that he ends his stupid existence in the House of Lords, and not on Tower Hill.

Cases such as these at first sight afford a strong presumption in favour of heredity, but if every circumstance were examined we might find that an accident or a misunderstanding had a very great deal to do with the transmission of qualities supposed to be paternal.[1]

In creative work it is clear that no amount of family influence or tradition can push forward a man who has not special aptitude, while among interpreters proficiency is obviously a personal matter, and the inexpert cannot rely upon some one else to put right his shortcomings.

[1] Many years ago, before the abolition of purchase in the army, a lad presented himself at the War Office with a letter of introduction from the head of an historic house—one that had given many a scion to the service of the State. The official read the letter, and, without asking the lad his name, concluded that he was a kinsman of the introducer. Shortly afterwards the lad received, not the Queen's shilling for which he had called, but a commission. He ultimately reached a very high rank in his profession. One of these days, no doubt, he will be pointed to as an example of heredity in a family with which he had not the remotest blood connection.

The conditions of music have caused its votaries to associate almost exclusively with one another. This may be due to class prejudice, but it is also probable that as the technical nature of their work is only slightly understood by those outside their vocation, they instinctively seek the company of the men who can appreciate their difficulties and triumphs.

There are innumerable families in which the art is cultivated so that each member has an individual voice or part in the performing of music. The interpretative faculty, the gift of acquiring instrumental facility, is developed in some to an extraordinary degree. In the families of instrumentalists there are frequently to be found several who profess various instruments, and numerous examples are to be met with in orchestras. The instinct for this branch of the art is so strong that there are some families with pedigrees quite as long, if not as illustrious, as that of the Bachs.

I have spoken of apprenticeship, and this is frequently met with. A man cannot practise his instrument in silence; his children are in the way of hearing music at all hours of the day, and they begin from the cradle to have their ears educated so that musical sounds present themselves in definite sequences. Unless they are psychically deaf they easily become susceptible to music and, as they grow

up, the training which they unconsciously have been undergoing shows appreciable results.

It would be absurd to say that every child who has an executant for his parent stands a good chance of becoming a genius, or even a musician of more than ordinary attainments, but at least he is in an environment which predisposes him to music. The son of an executant passes naturally into the ranks of a profession in whose customs and habits he has been brought up. There is no wide gap to be bridged over socially or financially. The father is not likely to take into serious consideration the aspects of worldly success which music as a career presents to so many. The idea that his son is taking an imprudent step never occurs to him; if his son has some talent for an instrument it is most probable that his bread-winning capacity is esteemed as highly as his technical ability, and the son continues the vocation of his father for purposes which are quite as utilitarian as they are artistic. In this way a caste comes into existence.

This leads us to consider a very important point. Music is notoriously profligate in its promises of immortality. It is niggardly in its earthly rewards; its life-history is penury, want, begrudging self-denial; often its record is one of energies spent in an unequal strife. This is the lot of the composer more than of the executant, who has his

instrument to rely upon. But such difficulties have to be encountered by certain classes in the social scale no matter what calling they choose to adopt, and to these classes the executant most commonly belongs. His status does not confer upon him independence or freedom to choose an appropriate vocation; he has no time to wait. He has to take what presents itself. His father may be so well established that he can regard his profession as a "going concern," and the son enters it as a matter of course, without any great heart-searchings as to the possibility of ultimate success. In his case music is no more a "risk" than any other calling; it is actually less, for the son becomes a partner in the "good-will" of the business; he has no fees to pay for indentures, and he gets his education, or a very large part of it, for nothing.

He becomes an executant, not because of any hereditary tendency, but because the environment is favourable, the life is familiar and congenial. There cannot fail to be drudgery, but it is less irksome than that of the shop or counting-house, and the occupation has a prestige of its own. To a certain class, therefore, the disadvantages of this branch of music as a career are no greater than they are in any other vocation, and the executant is guided as much by accidental environment as by instinct in adopting a

calling which lies ready to his hand. Thus we have expediency, opportunity, ambition, rivalry, association, all operating in varying degrees, and these have much to do with the special proficiency persisting in many families. But we do not know that some member of these families would have become a musician had he been isolated at an early age from musical surroundings.

At this point we may appropriately examine the circumstances of the Bach family, which is frequently referred to as the supreme example of heredity. If we study its generations closely we will find that what is loosely called heredity might equally be local or family tradition and influence—continuity *par excellence*. John Sebastian, the Founder of modern music, himself showed pride in his origin by working out his pedigree, thereby affording a strong proof that the family tie was of great moment to him. But he was not the head of the family, although he is sometimes spoken of in this way. He was the great-grandson of the "musical ancestor," and the line expired with his grandson. Thus he was nearer the end than the beginning of the musical genealogy, and though he was the most renowned member, he was in no respect the head of his house. At least five "lives" stood between him and that position. If we investigate the conditions, we find that the members of the Bach family rarely strayed from the

parental roof.[1] They lived in a time when humanity circulated less freely, when distractions were fewer, when the allurements of the world outside were undreamt of or forbidden. A taste for music that had become established in the family gained for the members some local prestige, and, as generation after generation came forth, the children from their earliest years were accustomed to hear music all day long till they grew old enough to take part in the doings of their elders. Music, in fact, in the Bach household, was a family custom, a habit, a convention. If some Bach child had been transplanted about its third year to totally different surroundings, cut completely off from family traditions, brought up in ignorance of its parentage, and had then shown a strikingly powerful attraction towards music, heredity might claim a strong case. But we know of no such instance. Of the large number who are recorded as showing a partiality for music, only two, John Sebastian and his son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, endure with us now. The "hereditary" spirit produced in the family no other transcendent genius whose works abide with us. Yet the environment was ideal, there was no repression of the instinct for music. The faculty had every opportunity for expansion. It is more than likely that the surroundings were too favourable, too congenial, for the assertion of any

[1] See p. 113 for John Sebastian Bach's perimeter.

superhuman cerebral effort after John Sebastian had produced his work.

At the outset I spoke of compensation, but in this instance music had established itself almost as an organic function in the Bach family, so that its members accepted it as a natural process. The faculty for music had become so ingrained that its absence in some individual of the family might well have been regarded with concern. In other words, what to the outside world might have seemed almost an abnormality was in this instance a natural and constant feature.

It may be urged that the tremendous brain effort on the part of John Sebastian Bach left little energy for his son or the generation following. But we are not able to assert this positively. We do not know what influences reacted on the later generations, whether his descendants were content to live in the shadow of a name which had made them conspicuous, or whether in their intercourse with the world they had acquired new ideas and interests which attracted them more powerfully than a family tradition.

The theory of attenuation has often been accepted too readily as an explanation of the interruption of continuity of vocation, but unless we know every conceivable circumstance of a man's life we can form no conclusions except on the broadest lines. The gaps in family histories, the slipshod chronicles,

the very natural reluctance of a man to discuss his private affairs, withhold from us important data. It is only in cases under our own observation that we are able to draw inferences, and it is unquestionable that in some of these nature would appear to have allowed each individual his share of intellect, and often it would seem as though the parent had not only expended his own inheritance but had swallowed up his son's entail as well, leaving to his immediate descendant an estate bankrupt of brains.

From whatever point of view we regard it, the case of the Bach family is exceptional. The dynasty, as it may well be called, existed at a time when the art was in its cradle, when there was no sharp line drawn between the creator of music and its interpreter. In those days the executant might be a composer, but the composer was almost always an executant as well, and this has to be borne in mind when applying to this instance what has been already said of continuity of vocation. The Bach example is unique in the annals of music: it depends largely if not entirely upon the accident that led John Sebastian to draw up his pedigree. Other composers of that or of any period either had no ancestors to speak of, or were glad to forget their claims to distinction. Many a genealogy has been compiled, testifying chiefly to the brazen assurance of the *nouveau riche*, who, in his anxiety to erect

a monument *ære perennius* has overlooked, if ever he knew it, one other dictum of Horace. The world has few records of those who "scorned the meaner avenues to fame"; it is good that one of these should be that of a composer.

Earlier in this chapter I spoke of conditions which favoured the development of interpretative ability in families and of the social status of the executant. Let us consider this point a little further.

If we study the Middle Ages we find a stamp of man highly endowed with the gifts of sculpture, architecture and painting; we meet with artists who, so far as we know, had not those limitations which have been too often present in the case of musicians. Instances constantly occur of men who took high and dignified positions in the State, who served their country as diplomats, as ambassadors, who were called upon to fortify cities, who came forward for their defence. Their literary works, too, are as much an imperishable record as their paintings and monuments and palaces. Possibly these arts had discovered their most appropriate environment and their distinctive class. They were much older, in the sixteenth century, than music is to-day, and, by some process of selection, nature had had time to determine who were most worthy of her gifts.

In music, however, this class has not been found.

The precariousness of the composer's calling may have influenced many who, despite a strong musical bent, followed the line of least resistance, of least renunciation. At the same time the attitude of many musicians towards indispensable conventions may have deterred others from adopting a vocation which insisted upon intercourse with a class not remarkable for a strict code of living. The recognition, too, that music was a caste-profession must have had some weight with those who were not conversant with its countersigns and passwords. But most of all the intellectual status of the musician was not so conspicuously high that outside his art he was either attractive or companionable, and, justly or unjustly, the prevailing impression was that the musical brain was fit for nothing except music.

It is unquestionable that there are many instances of men who displayed great gifts despite an education of the most elementary sort. The fact that so many operas in the past have been consigned to oblivion on account of their poor libretti proves that there were composers of the first rank who had not much literary discrimination. In this respect a very great change has taken place, for there are now numerous examples of composers possessed of the ability to provide their own texts, in some cases of superlative merit. This duality of faculty is entirely a modern phase, and must be

attributed to a consciousness of what is appropriate for music.

The kind of education that hitherto has been thought necessary for the musician has been circumscribed. His endowments have been considered specialised and applicable only to music. A man of average intelligence might apply the knowledge and experience gained from one kind of training to the mastering of some other subject.

The technical knowledge, for instance, that the stripling in command of a submarine has to acquire is often the sum of that possessed by three middle-aged men in as many different callings, and there has also to be added a tremendous responsibility. Many a lad, scarcely out of his teens, is entrusted with the charge of a delicate, costly machine, with the ever present contingency of an unforeseen mishap which will result, if not in a terrible death, most certainly in a court-martial which may put an end to his sea-going. But his knowledge is capable of application to several other callings, and the man who strands his ship does not of necessity strand himself as regards every other profession. The musician's knowledge is applicable to nothing except music, and it is impossible to conceive what is open to the contrapuntist *manqué* unless it is the pursuit in which François André Danican Philidor found so great a solace, namely, chess.

In drawing its exponents from a class in which the nuances of life are not very completely understood, music is at a grave disadvantage. Its pedigree is so short that there has not been time for the acquiring of those quarterings requisite to raise it to the rank even of squiredom.

The other arts, reverting to an imperishable lineage, can trace more vital an ancestry, and by reason of their tradition, and particularly from the fact that there are a large number of men of fairly equal accomplishment engaged in them, have tutored their ministers to a responsibility, to a comprehension and an acceptance of man's ways, which music, infinitely the younger, has yet to learn. So it is that the gift is found among men who have not enjoyed much in the way either of education or of that intercourse with their fellows which softens asperities and makes life less discordant.

A high mental endowment, thrust, as it were, upon a young man so as to exaggerate his shortcomings in other directions, raises him suddenly into a sphere vastly different from that in which he more naturally would have taken his place, and, conscious of his superiority over those with whom he comes in contact, conscious also of his own defects, he cherishes a grudge against those who are his betters in every respect save one, and he is possessed by an unreasoning hatred, a blind, inexplicable desire for some kind of revenge. It

would seem as though he were quarrelling with the very faculty which distinguishes him above others, and the way is open for refractory developments. It is a singular fact that while so much is ascribed to music for its chastening and mollifying influence over humanity, it is the stormy and rebellious spirits who so often give it forth.

It is equally striking that while the composer will accept in his life at the hands of those who are his inferiors more humiliations than any other man possessed of an equivalent amount of brain power,—that while he submits to privations and conditions which the physically laziest, but mentally most active trades-unionist would sum up as "a dog's life," his true vocation seems to be that of an anarchist. Not a few composers, were we to follow the course of their lives down dark alleys and round suspicious corners, would lead us, not to a conductor's desk, but to a street barricade. If we consider the nature of their calling, this looks like a wild improbability, but the trustworthy side of history leaves us in no doubt.

Class prejudice and resentment towards those in a more secure and placid state of society may account for this; it may be a trick of imitating the least estimable qualities of some of the composers who have been great; it may be the lack of those salutary disciplinary measures to which man is not unknown

to resort when his fellow-man acts at variance with an established code of ethics. Yet we have one case after another of composers who outraged every rule that was sacred, and yet were received again into the fold without a breath of censure. In older days the artist generally was regarded as a man who was regulated (if the word is not out of place) by a code of his own, a code whose chief merit lay in its extreme simplicity. But what was the rule then as regards the artist is now a rare exception. In music, however, the executant might not care to risk the experiment of putting his outward characteristics in the background.

The chinless creature with unkempt locks, with a moth-eaten rabbit-skin "Immensikoff," and a diamond gracing his clammy hand, may be the object of adoration on the part of a "fiddler's audience," which shows just what its musical knowledge amounts to by applauding the "Liebestod" long before the last bar. But to find the type by day in any calling outside music we must cross Waterloo Bridge; by night he is blackening his face or turning somersaults, for he hails from "The Halls." In England, at least, in any other art, such a being would be a joy to his comrades, and they would see to it that he despised not their chastening.

I have devoted more space than I at first intended to this aspect of the musician's environment, but it

is one which cannot be wholly disregarded, for the pose, the ridiculous claim to be exempt from social observances (never a burden to anyone who has an ounce of self-respect), the desire to be recognised as a genius by the nature of the thing on, not in, his skull—these have caused much hostility towards the art, and in no small degree have alienated the sympathies of many who might otherwise have been good friends to music.

When we come to consider the composer we find heredity exercising a very slender influence. In the past, when creation and interpretation were equally developed in the same individual, the musical thought was less complex and lay for the most part upon an even and unobstructed plane. So much heed was paid to matters of rule that it was not difficult to produce as "creative" work some kind of music which would not outrage conventions. Environment unquestionably aided the composer at a time when it was essential that he should be an executant as well. But in the case of a performer upon instruments of the clavier type there were two factors to be reckoned with, for not only were the instruments themselves in a state of transition, but also the music which could be performed on them was undergoing a change. Therefore the composer who wished to display his powers as an executant had to bear in mind the enlarged capabilities of his instrument as well as

the increase in musical thought. In this way his répertoire had to be extended, and his simplest plan—if not the only one—was to write music for himself.[1]

The conditions of music at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries were favourable to the composer arising from an environment in which the musical bent was strong. But the subsequent periods have not produced a composer of exceptional creative power whose parents were endowed with a high degree of the musical faculty. There are plentiful examples of composers whose parents were ardent music-lovers, practising the art either as an accomplishment or as a means of livelihood, but in the composer of the first rank what may be called the coefficient of heredity is low. Some kind of musical environment appears to be necessary, for, with the doubtful exception of Berlioz, there is no prominent instance of the musical faculty asserting itself in a lad who was brought up altogether outside a musical atmosphere. But it would be straining the point to assert that heredity

[1] The contrast with the procedure of our own time is striking. A "virtuoso" pianist or violinist is not regarded (popularly speaking) as being able to write for the one instrument with which he is thoroughly acquainted. He is compelled to fall back upon the barren répertoire of stock concertos. Very rarely is a new concerto played at an established series of concerts. It is only the interpreter who is new.

is present in these instances of musical families, for if it were we should expect to find a much larger number of men endowed with creative ability. Music as an art was enjoying widespread cultivation between 1830 and 1880, yet the composers who came forth during that period were in number very much below that which we should expect in proportion to the movement in favour of music. There were no doubt scores of men writing music, but there were extremely few who began or ended a style or period in the development of the art. At the present day the number of men who are aiming at distinction as composers has increased to an enormous extent, and this may give colour to the view that heredity is asserting itself. But we have also to consider other agencies. The perception and appreciation of the higher forms of music are to be found in a much wider field, and styles which ten years ago were denounced as extravagances have come to be readily accepted, perhaps too readily for the endurance of the composers' fame. Concerts have become almost a daily need, and their educational value is being extended to the non-musical person. The musical aspirant, instead of having to be content with the hasty study of a full score in a crowded public reading-room, can buy the work for a few pence and take it with him to the concert. But in spite of these advantages, the great musical gift seems still to

arise in men who have with difficulty penetrated into a musical atmosphere, and while vast changes have taken place in popular taste, exceptional creative ability remains rare. In its highest form it appears sporadically, and we have no absolute means for tracing its origin. In the next chapter I discuss the grounds for an assumption that there is a form of *subjective* heredity which may account—partly at least—for the occurrence of those cerebral endowments not directly transmitted from parent to offspring.

In regard to one aspect of the matter we are on sure ground, for we know that no great composer had for his son a composer who was equally great, and also that no great composer sprang from a parent whose creative ability was exceptional. The sporadic origin of great talent has just been referred to, but when we come to consider the case of the descent of conspicuous ability, we find a variety of circumstances which may be altogether external or accidental. It is a truism that acquired characteristics cannot be transmitted, and even if we were to dispute this we should find ourselves confronted with a number of conditions which might operate so as to break down any strong hereditary tendency. We should need to eliminate every accident, we should need almost to change the state of society, before we could definitely assert that genius can beget genius.

Here we are not concerned with music and com-

posers only; we are not compelled to refer to dubious records; for we see under our own eyes many examples of great men in their work and their surroundings—we see, too, what is of immense importance, the attitude of the world towards them and their accomplishment, and, no matter how powerful the hereditary bent may be, there seems to be an inexplicable law of nature which assigns a limit to the continuity of one strain of thought.

In some cases it is possible that the continuity of vocation may be designedly interrupted for purely humane reasons. The parent who has undergone an arduous struggle in order to win his position may be reluctant that his son should suffer the same experiences, and he often does all in his power to discourage him from following a profession which entails hardships. He is too well aware that a breath may turn the scale to glory or to bitter disappointment. There are cases in which the brilliant father is so occupied with fighting his own battles and advancing from step to step that he scarcely heeds his son at the vital turning-points of his youth, when character, infinitely more than the mere passing of examinations, ought to be carefully watched.

There are numerous instances of the famous father being succeeded by the mediocre son, and often the world has summed up harshly against the latter, remembering the father only at the most meteoric

stage of his career, and instituting a comparison which is grossly unfair. There are cases in which the vanity of the parent, developed at a time when the son was still a child, so masters its possessor that the son grows up a mere cypher, forced into the background by his father's self-assertiveness and overbearing personality. In these cases it is not the individual strain which has become exhausted, but the patience of a world weary of torrents of words.

Any public is apt to grow sated with the incessant reference to one person, and may change its allegiance, not because of any violent alteration of opinion, but because it demands a rest after the persistent hammering of one form of doctrine. Those who study political life need not wander far afield for illustrations. Such a public has had so much of the father that it is indisposed to accept the son, and his efforts are discounted before he has had an opportunity for showing his capabilities. In following his father's vocation, he starts with the severe penalty of his name, and, realising this, he early becomes convinced of the futility of gaining distinction, and resigns himself ultimately to that most inequitable of all punishments, that of being the son of a distinguished father. In other instances the son may assume some of his father's credit without exerting himself, and is bound to receive short shrift

for his complacency, presenting to the world the ludicrous spectacle of an ass in a lion's skin.

In the highly gifted composer, as I have already said, the coefficient of heredity is low. His parents have no strong bent for music, nor do they attain even considerable executive ability.

It is the fashion, in some quarters, to assert that music is a form of "degeneracy," and it is unfortunately true that there are composers who deliberately assume this as a pose. But while there are innumerable cases of deterioration of the mental and physical faculties being transmitted through several generations, there is no instance of exceptional creative ability in music begetting its like. In a very high percentage of cases this "degeneracy" is due to a blot upon the nervous system which may persist to the third and fourth generation, but it is not fair to derive psychological conclusions from a purely pathological cause. It would be equally unfair to infer that as Beethoven's deafness was the result of the sequelæ of an acquired disease, so also was his music.

Again, high executive technique is often found equally developed in father and son, and environment and continuity of vocation exercise a strong influence, but in the case of the composer it seems to be in inverse ratio to the musical ability of the stock from which he springs.

How then are we to account for the creative faculty? I have emphasised the fact that the auditory apparatus is undergoing a gradual development, and that the psychical result of this development, as exemplified in music, is taking forms which were undreamt of in preceding generations. Each generation beholds a new phase which carries the art far beyond the limits which were assigned to it even by the greatest of its exponents in past years.

We must remember that in every branch of cerebral activity in which man may distinguish himself—in every branch, that is to say, except music—great brilliance may be attained without a scintilla of evidence that the faculty which engendered it has altered for hundreds of years.

Nature is disclosing her jealously guarded secrets one by one to the curious eye of science, but they are not man's creations; it was man's necessity that discovered them. But within the range of the highest intelligence it is impossible to conceive of an expression of the human brain which was not brought to the fullest maturity or at least foreshadowed centuries ago.

Music, however, can point to no marked premonitions further back than the fifteenth century. Men have arisen, and will continue to arise, to state music in terms which no man on earth has proclaimed before them. These men spring up sporadically;

the inherited tendency, if it exists, is sluggish. In some instances they have not had a wide acquaintance with the music that is accepted as great; in others, their opportunities for hearing acknowledged masterpieces have been few. Their most intimate surroundings have not been specially favourable towards creative effort of a unique kind; not infrequently they have arisen from an environment desperately adverse in its conditions to the nurture of tremendous cerebral activity.

Weigh the evidence as we may, we find ourselves baffled at every turn, unless we abide by the testimony of evolution. But while that may show us the milestones on the way, it cannot tell us who put them there.

Many a moral might be drawn from heredity by those who have a taste for the work. Only one will be drawn here. Where the father is brilliant, the son, if he is ambitious and anxious to win renown, will be wise to avoid his father's profession and name. Often he does so with no notion of career or ambition; he is guided by an irresistible instinct, and it may be that he is to the end of his days quite unconscious of the fact that, in interrupting the continuity, regarded in some families as inviolable, he is maintaining the oldest law of all—the law of self-preservation.

CHAPTER XIV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

ANY attempt to arrive at a conclusion based upon a study of the progress of the musical sense must be inadequate, for all the evidence upon which we can rely presents only one side of the question. From the testimony of our observation we comprehend what man has done; we have, as it were, the finished product before us, but the machinery that wrought it is beyond all knowledge.

In the vast universe of the brain, cells perish and are born again in the fraction of an instant. Every breath we draw, every thought that passes through our mind, entails destruction and re-creation. In that impalpable laboratory there are balances adjusted with the most exquisite nicety; there are chemical processes whose nature we cannot even dimly conjecture; no human ingenuity can devise an instrument which can record the quite insensible variation of temperature which even a jest

may produce in the brain. How man acquired his faculties is as great a mystery as his exercise of them. All that we know of them is gained by studying them from one stage to another, by piecing together isolated facts noted by men working out with infinite patience some apparently barren side-issue, with probably little thought of the momentousness of the result. The primary conditions we can only guess at; we can make no deductions unless we establish certain presumptions. Humanity is infinite; it is only man's power of interpreting man that is finite.

At the several stages of this inquiry I purposely left on one side a number of considerations which are dealt with more appropriately together. I suggested that the various theories regarding the evolution of the musical sense did not carry us very far. This to a great extent is owing to the confusion which still exists in the minds of many between the creative and the interpretative faculty. Obviously the difference must be considerable. Again, scientific writers have not laid any great stress on the process by which our modern music has been evolved. We may ask why it was that in the Hellenic period, when singing was cultivated as an accomplishment, there was scarcely a trace of harmony; we may ask why it was that for fifteen centuries this condition of "music" remained unaltered; further, we may ask

why, when the mind demanded something more satisfying than a bare system of harmony, the steps in advance were slow, and why it was that music began to move ahead only when instruments provided the means for creating sounds and training the ear by constant experiment.

The theory of sexual selection may be admitted for the sake of argument, although I have suggested mimicry as a possible explanation of the origin of the musical faculty. This is not inconsistent with Darwin's hypothesis; it is, indeed, part of it; but it does not account for subsequent developments. If the human voice was trained to take part in the highly elaborate performances of the Greek Chorus, it is almost inconceivable that no one, even by way of experiment, attempted to add his own musical comments on the theme. We know what instruments were possessed by the Greeks, yet we have no records that the extraordinary technique which was applied to other branches of art was directed to the contriving of new instruments or improving those in existence.

At a later stage, a crude system of harmony was established, but only by the application of a written law, not by the exercise of a highly organised faculty. The mind made no effort to seek outside a rigid formula for any sound to satisfy it, or rather,—shall we say?—the ear of the mind

was in such an embryonic condition that it was impervious to any sound which did not conform with the canons of the theorists.

Still later, when instruments gave so great a support to the art, the musical sense became conscious only very slowly of a new domain of sound.

Even in our own time we have seen the Index Expurgatorius of music crowded with works which eventually have been admitted, even welcomed, within the canon of the law.

At each of these stages the faculty for music must have undergone some change, and that change must have come about through a development of the brain.

To account for this we cannot rely upon any theory concerning "acquired characteristics"—that indeed now rests upon less sure a foundation than it did at one time. But heredity unquestionably must be admitted, not, however, the heredity which arises by sexual intervention, but a species of "subjective heredity," whereby a specific influence is transmitted from one generation to another, or even confined to one generation alone, and this process is cerebral. The schoolboy of to-day has as much difficulty in learning Greek as his fellow in ancient Rome: knowledge acquired by one individual cannot be transmitted by heredity, but taste in a given direction can be cultivated and improved. If in place of

a mental state such as is fostered by what I have called "continuity of vocation," we substitute mental *states*, and if we here regard "vocation" as a form of intellectual culture which can influence a generation no matter how slightly, we have a form of heredity which I have ventured to call "subjective."

In every age the composer unconsciously aids the development of the musical sense of those with whom he comes in contact, but all that is transmitted from one generation to another is infinitesimal. Now, just as in remote ages the brain had come to acquire certain endowments, not after the lapse merely of generations, but of centuries, and just as the specialisation of one function led to the quickening of another, so, in estates and communities of mankind, the establishment of one phase of mental energy upon a definite basis perpetuated it, not in its fulness but in an increase, slight, yet substantial enough to carry on the process of development. In other words, the acquired characteristics of one generation are not passed on complete to the generation succeeding it, but a minute fraction of these characteristics alone is preserved and transmitted, as it were, in an arithmetical progression, in which the unit is so small as to be almost intangible.

We may go further and put forward the hypothesis that cell-proliferation may take place on such a scale that it exhausts its energies, and is compelled

to sustain itself by a system of autophagy, consuming itself by the effort to exist, and leaving only a few surviving cells to repeat the process. If we accept this as a feasible explanation, the imperceptible development, not of one faculty alone, but of all, can be accounted for.

There is another aspect. We know that certain pathological conditions are attributed to "predisposition," a theory—if it has not already passed beyond this stage—which is likely to gain ground in the near future. I am not aware that it has been considered as applicable to mental processes, but if it is not invalid in regard to them it may be hazarded here. If, then, we have a man predisposed to music, he will form an appropriate nidus for the seeds of subjective heredity, and he will show a development which is progressive in relation to other intellectual movements in the same direction. If this view may be advanced, we may say that what has led up to our present state of music has been an imperceptible preparation extending over centuries, culminating only in the last two hundred years or less, when men's minds became susceptible to impressions in a new form, assimilating them, utilising them, and extending them as the intellectual process became more intricate and penetrating. For we know that at no time in its history has music shown a phase which has not been definitely related to some

one preceding it. There is no example of a complete break with the past, none of retrogression or of degeneration. There is no instance of a phase having arisen, entirely self-dependent and spontaneous. We may therefore conclude that music at the present day has not by any means reached finality, unless we have beheld the zenith of man's powers in this art. This, as I hope to show in a moment, is a view that cannot be entertained.

If what I have already said accounts for the progress of a cerebral force, it is only part of the process, and we must go back again to primitive conditions to find the origins of those functional accessories which in those who practise the musical art attain a high degree of acuteness. Into the order in which the senses arose we need not enter, but we may consider the sense of hearing as necessary to man for self-protection. First there came memory to record the sound in the brain, then analysis to explain its nature. These gradually became "cerebral truisms" by a process probably not widely different from that which I have just described as subjective heredity *plus* predisposition. Their development may have occupied as many scores of centuries before the earliest records of man, as the development of music has taken from these records up to the present time.

I have said in an earlier chapter that the memory-

centre and the analytical centre in connection with the auditory centre have undergone great transformations. The sense of direction for sound, even for sound close at hand, in civilised man at the present day, is becoming atrophied. It is aided or supplemented by other cerebral acts not primarily connected with the act of audition. Expectation is often intensified by dread, and the sentry on outpost duty on a dark night may easily persuade himself that a sound which was made within his own lines behind him came from the enemy's trenches in front. In isolated cases the sense persists unimpaired. The quarrel of artillery at Waterloo, the vibrations at Gettysburg, the boom of the salutes at Portsmouth at the naval review of the Diamond Jubilee, the hammering of the guns in the battle of Tsushima, were heard scores of miles away by ears whose acuity had not yet become reduced. But to the Kaffir, still in a state in which he relies on his senses for self-protection, a column on the march in South Africa betrays itself as undisguisedly as the sound of a horn between the hedgerows in an English country lane gives warning of the approach of a motor.

But while memory and analysis have probably not undergone any wide modifications since prehistoric times among races which we still call primitive, they have become transformed in relation to their utility

to civilised man in the sphere in which he finds himself to-day, and have become more particularly adapted to the necessities which his place in that sphere demands.

At the present day a certain kind of music is in primitive races of the utmost importance to them in their feasts and ceremonials and worship, but I cannot admit that they are even yet at the stage which was regarded as music by the ancient Greeks. For future researches the material that has been collected will be invaluable in showing the state of "music" among these races in our own generation, but we have to exclude them entirely because we do not possess the necessary historical records stretching over a long space of time. Nor can we consider here why it is that the highest development is to be found among races which are European or of European origin.

The memory of sound and the analysis of it fitted in automatically with man's purpose in nature, but he had no analytical faculty beyond that of detecting the note of prey, or friend or enemy. Still less had he the faculty of analysing the sound of the wind that swept through the strings of his loom and caused a multiplicity of notes. These had no meaning for him because they were of no necessity to him: they taught him nothing. Self-education, then as now, meant self-protection, and his aim was

to survive all perils. But it is just this analytical faculty, or rather its absence, that brings prehistoric man, in terms of music, in close touch with a form of thought that is not quite obsolete even in the twentieth century.

Of the mental conception of sound we have no means of knowing, till Bach's time, or even later, as some would insist, whether the musical idea was actually "heard" in the mind, as modern composers hear it, before it was committed to paper, or whether it was "worked out" by some rule-of-thumb method. We can only rely upon documentary evidence, and from the empiric procedure which was resorted to in order to build up the early structure of harmony we can derive no conclusion other than that the mind did not conceive sounds for itself, and that it was slow in appreciating sounds which it encountered by accident.

In an earlier chapter I referred to the theory of Latency, and what I have just said deals with this question. I admit that it is a theory which it is difficult to controvert, for it appears to be supported by the historical evidence to which we are able to refer, step by step, and in addition we have the invaluable testimony of observations which we can make in our own time. There is no composer who from his own experience would assert that certain advanced proceedings were always ripe in his brain

and lacked only the means to put them in action. A course of self-examination conscientiously pursued would readily confirm the fact that his creative faculty has not at every stage been constant. The development of music is exemplified in the development of the individual composer. In our own day, it is particularly the case that there is a marked difference between the early work of some men and the work which they produce in their maturity.

Weissmann says,[1] "We have definite proofs of the occurrence among savages of musical talent capable of the same education as our own. We must therefore consider their talent to be as high as ours, although it is generally hidden because untrained during the lifetime of its possessor."

The only instances that he adduces are those of instrumentalists, and the value of his assertion depends not a little upon what meaning is to be attached to the words "our own" at the end of the first sentence quoted. To explain the absence of a talent on the grounds that "it is generally hidden because untrained during the lifetime of its possessor" is, for a man of science, scarcely lucid. It will no doubt be consoling to not a few would-be geniuses who find difficulty in convincing an incredulous world.

On the other hand we have evidence that, century

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

after century, races of men not savage but endowed with the highest intellectual capacity that the world has seen, were incapable of adding one series of notes to another so that they should sound agreeably. We further might expect to find a strong proof of the existence of Latency in an irrepressible instinct to extend the scope of music as soon as melody was established as a cerebral conception. But we find nothing of the kind. We have one formula after another, as well as an immense quantity of music literally "turned out" mechanically without any indication that the musical sense, as we know it to-day, was in operation.

There is a vast difference between the self-development of a man living in primitive conditions and the training of his musical sense in an environment which is the result of centuries of experience. It is no doubt possible to teach a savage to sing European tunes or even to play upon an instrument. Among the Japanese to-day, a race in which there persists a scale quite different from our own, the pianoforte is being taught, and in the next few years we may see a Japanese "virtuoso" in our midst. It, further, is possible to teach a deaf-mute to play the pianoforte correctly and mechanically, but these are all instances of a studiously cultivated performance. We have no example of any one in these categories *creating* music.

When Weissmann comes to discuss creative effort,

the conclusion at which he arrives seems at variance with his other statements. He asks us to suppose[1] that "a child endowed with the talent of a Mozart was born among some savage nation such as the Samoans before they were influenced by European civilisation." He then says that this "aboriginal Mozart" might have raised "Samoan music to a higher stage. But he would not have raised it to the modern symphony."

But he immediately refutes this by asserting[2] that "the high musical talent which is more or less possessed by civilised man at the present time does not depend upon a gradual increase in the musical sense, and that such increase being non-existent does not require explanation. No such rise and increase of the musical faculty by itself has taken place. The musical sense is rather an ancient possession of mankind, chiefly depending upon the highly developed auditory organ, and this was transferred to man from his animal ancestors, and has not increased at any rate beyond the condition reached by the lowest of existing savages."

Weissmann disposes of every obstacle with facility. He overlooks the essential fact that the musical sense to-day can conceive sounds mentally and in silence, without giving any outward sign of their presence,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 42.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

and it is the absence, or, to use his own word, the "non-existence," of any evidence that this musical sense was experienced in the past, that favours the theory that the faculty for music has very materially increased. It is not by any gratuitous speculation as regards the musical sense of primitive races only that we can explain the present facts of music among civilised nations, and what we know to be the latest phase of high development is of infinitely greater consequence than that which we assume to be the earliest phase of the faculty. Still we can gain much from a study of all the steps which are supplied by the art itself.

If we regard music up to the dawn of harmony and for some little time after it as primitive, there is an explanation which, however, does not shake the theory that the development of the faculty for music is a comparatively recent one.

Since almost all the music of the earlier periods was vocal, it follows that no individual could suggest mentally what his neighbour ought to sing, and the most gifted singer-composer could only note fortuitous results produced by combinations of voices over which he had no control. He might record in his mind what he had actually heard, but he was unable to impart in an instant to others the mental sounds which were created by his own sense. Even with the means for writing down what he heard with

the ear of the mind, he did not avail himself of his opportunities, and it was not until he had an instrument with which he could produce the other sounds of which he was dimly conscious, but which as yet he was too inexpert to realise, that his musical sense showed any independence.

We may pass from this point and see how the sense was increased. Having arrived at the contriving of some sounds which were agreeable, the composer became aware that he was able to analyse them mentally. By an effort of memory he found that he could hear in silence a series of notes in combination with a second or even a third series, and that by close application he could increase this power. At the same time he was conscious of another mental act. By studying a page of written music, the notes which he saw gave rise to an auditory impression in his mind, and the process could be reversed so that he was able to put down on paper what he "heard" in silence. This, however, was not a new cerebral act; it was merely the extension and application to music of the long established processes of reading and writing; but it demanded a much higher organisation for its production.

He then found that by the application of certain rules he was able to handle his written notes so that even if the auditory sense was suspended, the eye would still guide him. In this way the creative

faculty was able to record mental expressions of music, to study their possibilities by a combination of eye-sense and inner-ear-sense, and to extend them by the additional application of rule. It will be obvious that some processes in this act could be over-cultivated at the expense of others, that so much could be referable to fixed rule, and accepted as meeting the requirements of the eye, that the primary faculty concerned in music might become attenuated and cease to be of the first importance.

This actually has happened in modern as well as in ancient times when the musical sense was less developed, for in every age there have been men ready to exalt the means, to detach certain practices in music from their cerebral bearings, and to emphasise some purely theoretical contrivance without at the same time considering its significance as a creative act.

I have already said that there are deaf-mutes who can be taught to play the piano and to give an entirely mechanical performance. It is not inconceivable that "music" can be taught to an individual bereft of all sense of sound, in such a way that by the application of rule he can write something not violently disturbing to the ear. Not a little of this deaf-mute music has been written in modern times by men who would resent the

imputation that they were not endowed with the musical sense to a pre-eminent degree.

At a later stage, after the establishment of the power of analysis, there came the recognition of correlated parts, the distributing of moments of energy and of quietness, the contrasting of sections—the perception, in a word, that all music was not on the same plane; that it was capable of a variety of moods so as to express emotion. This called for a study of the structure of instrumental music, and the result was the amplification of the dance-measure, its extension and modification so as to make the music independent of words or of action, thus foreshadowing the larger instrumental forms. The faculty for music in this way acquired the judgment and concentration necessary for comprehending and sustaining an extensive musical conception.

As instruments became more numerous and technical performance on them grew more accomplished, the musical sense was applied to the analysing of their characteristic timbres, and the forecasting of the probable result of combining two or more one with another. There was also the increased perception, as facility was developed, that some kinds of music reacted on the mind in a definite way, and that when once a train of thought was associated with one kind of music, it

was necessary to take account of the appropriateness of the music that went with it.

Therefore the mind came to discriminate between the emotional value of one kind of music and another, and, particularly when some text was set, the just perception of the meaning of the words stimulated the musical sense to provide an equivalent. When there were no words, vague as the meaning of the musical idea might be, it insisted upon having in juxtaposition with it other musical ideas which could be contrasted with it and yet would not produce any glaring feeling of incongruity.

As the musical sense developed it entered into closer communion with those other branches of man's thought which could not be expressed verbally, but yet sought for some outlet. Then came the moment when a composition ceased to be interesting merely on account of its structure or technical details—when the composer attempted to convey by means of sound those elusive moods which we feel possess a deep significance and yet evade us when we try to put them into words.

I have said that with Beethoven one phase of the musical sense attained its highest development. I may go further and assert that while music was continued by some of his successors with an equal appreciation of the pitch to which he had brought the art, and also with an enlarged facility, their

mental coefficient was not any higher than his. No performance is difficult when once the way to achieve it is pointed out, but the honours rest always with the pioneer, even though his followers attain the greater perfection.

I said, further, that, as in Beethoven the musical sense had reached a climax, it was necessary for its vitality that it should be transferred by some inscrutable law of nature to another class of intellect. If we take the men who have done the most to extend the art of music since 1830 we find that their technical equipment was of the most meagre description. It was as though nature had recognised that a new order of brain must be put in training so as to prepare the way for subjective changes. In other words, the musical sense, having reached completeness in one direction, was directed in another so as to acquire energy for its further advancement, and as the hard and fast principles of an older *régime* had been exhausted, it became necessary for a new train of thought to be introduced in order that a fresh impulse should be given to the art.

It is clear that the musical sense must have attained independence of formulæ and of the restrictions of the schools when it declared itself so potently in men who had nothing to rely upon in the way of family tradition or early training. Their talent was

sporadic: it arose in conditions not strikingly favourable to its development: it was entirely adventitious. There was no continuity of vocation in their case: but they were intensely susceptible to the influence of others, predisposed in the highest degree to the reaction upon their minds of the fullest expression to which the art had attained, and this was converted into music so as specially to meet their own cerebral endowments. Accessory as was their musical sense in its earliest stages, it ultimately reached such proportions as to exceed the primary circumstances which called it into existence.

We have now the dawn of a conviction that in music there was a deeper purpose than mere superficial legerdemain with contrapuntal artifices. Music had entered into the dominion of man's thought, and was being sustained by men whose education in observing the other signs of cerebral activity brought them to inquire into the mysterious faculty with which they themselves were endowed. We are not concerned with their theories or the conclusions at which they arrived: we may dissent from them at every turn: we may consider that their artistic sense was far behind their highly acute cerebral development, but what is of vital importance to us is the fact that they *had* theories and points of view, and that they *had* convictions and exerted themselves in order to place them before the world. At this

period, which occurred in the midst of the Romantic Movement, it is remarkable that there was scarcely a composer of any standing who did not, at some time or other in his career, state definitely in words his attitude towards music, and its significance to him. Wrong-headed these may seem to many of a later date, vain and inconsistent, but we are not analysing their æsthetical standards: we are noting the fact that music had reached so great an estate that it was causing the serious to study its meaning, and, what is equally noteworthy, they were men well able to express their opinions with vigour and emphasis. There was on their part no small sign of inquietude that they were unable to bring their art into line with other phases of mental activity. They were showing an incredulity that music could be an entity completely detached from every other cerebral process. Their difficulties and efforts have been inherited by every composer whose brain-work shows development, and the results are to be seen in the mental endowments of the men who are now devoting themselves to composition.

The natural gift in our own day is bestowed not upon extremely talented individuals whose mental horizon is limited: it is showing itself in many who were not of the status of the older composers: it is inhabiting, not an empty mind, but a mind which pounces upon every fact in life or in thought,

and makes use of everything that may stimulate the faculties. But everyone, with a few exceptions too unimportant for our consideration, has demonstrated that he realises, no matter how faintly, the presence in his work of some quality which eludes him. The direct statement of idea which at one time was the composer's highest aim has yielded to a recognition that something more is requisite. The composer is attempting, as was pointed out in an earlier chapter, to grasp the musical thought as it passes through his brain, and to present it as nearly as possible in its original form, but he is hampered by the inadequate means for recording it. It is as if he had to express himself not in one language merely but in many, with points of philology and construction to be explained at every turn before he could communicate the thought in his brain.

In our own day the disposition is strong to avoid the old formal lines and to crave for a medium specially fitted for a newer phase of thought. The thought, too, is deepening in complexity, and yet, when we consider the result, it is often impossible to conceive what faculties the composer is exercising. For if we study the various elements we find that out of many there are no two that are in just agreement. Every note seems violently in collision with its neighbour; one theme is opposed to another;

the texture is broken up into a series of melodies which appear to proceed on their own way independent of context or harmony. There is a maze of sound, but of such intricacy that, even with the notes before us, we are unable to realise how it was made. Yet every part falls into its place inevitably, and we feel that the result is a kind of music intimately associated with a form of thought which we as yet are unable to bring into relation with other cerebral processes.

Time alone will pronounce the verdict upon its æsthetic value; at present we can only consider its bearings on the music-sense, and whether the most advanced composers of our time are serious in their efforts, or are merely gauging the credulity of their public, they incontestably possess a mental equipment which is unique in the annals of music.

Many a man has found that the thing which he flung to his audience in a fit of caprice or exasperation expressed himself more than he was aware at the time. So it may be that the work of some composers of to-day, while it may be as puzzling to them as it is to us, is nearer a future stage of music than we can foresee. Everyone who listens to music is undergoing some development, although the rapidity of the process varies in each individual. But the development is going on, and the irony is that often a man unconsciously owes the training

of his critical judgment to the very composers upon whom he turns with an infallible air that settles, in his mind, their reputation for all time.

Music in our day consists of a perpetual struggle to give definite expression to subconscious thought. No one can tell for how many centuries the strife will continue until man evolves the new faculty which will make the content of music clear. Whatsoever it may signify in time to come, we are bound to consider it as a faculty fitted to the special circumstances of him who possesses it. In remoter times man may have heard, with the ear of the mind, all that was necessary for his life and for his way of living. The faculty for music has gradually developed in step with human needs and endeavours. It is now more than at any former period seeking for a substantial basis upon which to erect itself in closer relation with the other expressions of man's mind. It has a vague perception that its destiny is yet to be pronounced, and those who possess it are showing this by their work. Some men, too much occupied by ephemeral matters, by the mere μὲν and δὲ of the thing, are scarcely conscious of any undercurrent in the tide of music, but the flow is nevertheless there,—a movement which, in the expanse of time, is almost invisible. It is well, perhaps, that there are those who do not note the

course of the windlestraws, for their curiosity might distract them from the aims which they set out to accomplish. But their work, too, records an anxiety to penetrate the veil, whether they are conscious of it or not.

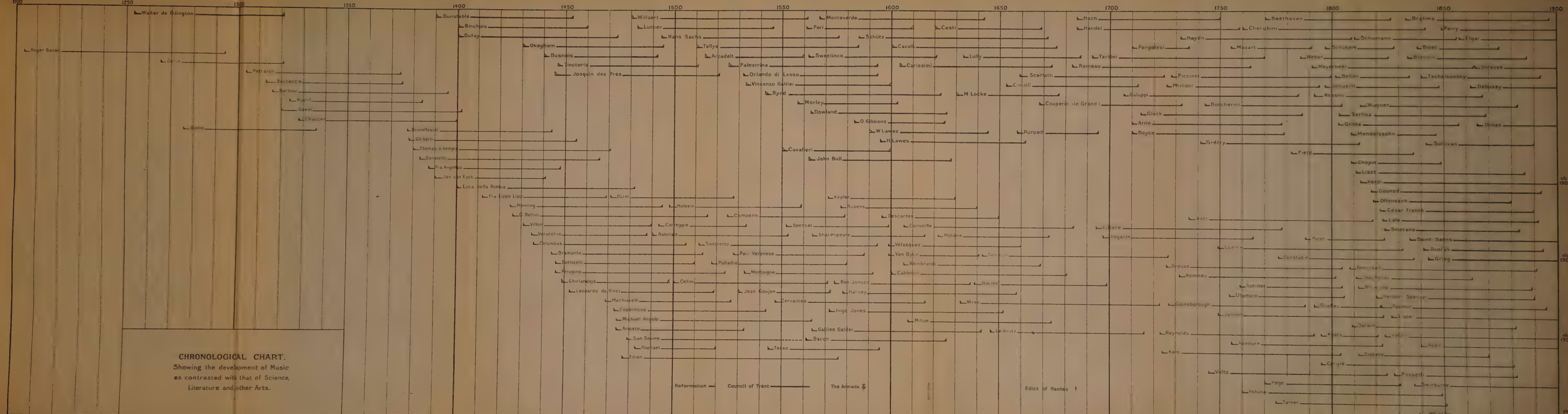
We are all groping in a mist, and the sum of our life is but a breath tossed to the wind. But, if the history of evolution is of any value, surely we who employ the musical sense are the forerunners of a race which will bring into man's comprehension a new form of reason,—perhaps even an altered system of ethics. May not humanity then find in music a principle upon which some wider interpretation of existence is based?

NOTE

It is impossible to make a Chronological Chart which will satisfy all. This one, however, is sufficient for my purpose, which is to indicate the musical contemporaries of some of the great men of Science, Art, and Literature in the past seven hundred years. The composers are given in the upper section of the chart. I have selected those who are identified with definite stages in the progress of music, and although many names have been omitted owing to the narrow space at my disposal, the reader who is inclined to find fault with my choice must remember that the chart is designed to illustrate the argument in the text, and not to serve as a table of reference. At the same time I have made every effort to secure accuracy, but as not a few of the dates are still in doubt, those investigators who have made a special study of the various periods here represented may perhaps light upon discrepancies.

The chart is on the scale of 1 millimètre to the year. The vertical lines mark off decades, and the exact year in any interspace can be found by means of a millimètre rule. The small triangles preceding each name and terminating the line of life indicate respectively the year of birth and death. When the date is doubtful the triangle is printed in outline.

To face Chronological Chart.



CHRONOLOGICAL CHART.

Showing the development of Music as contrasted with that of Science, Literature and other Arts.

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